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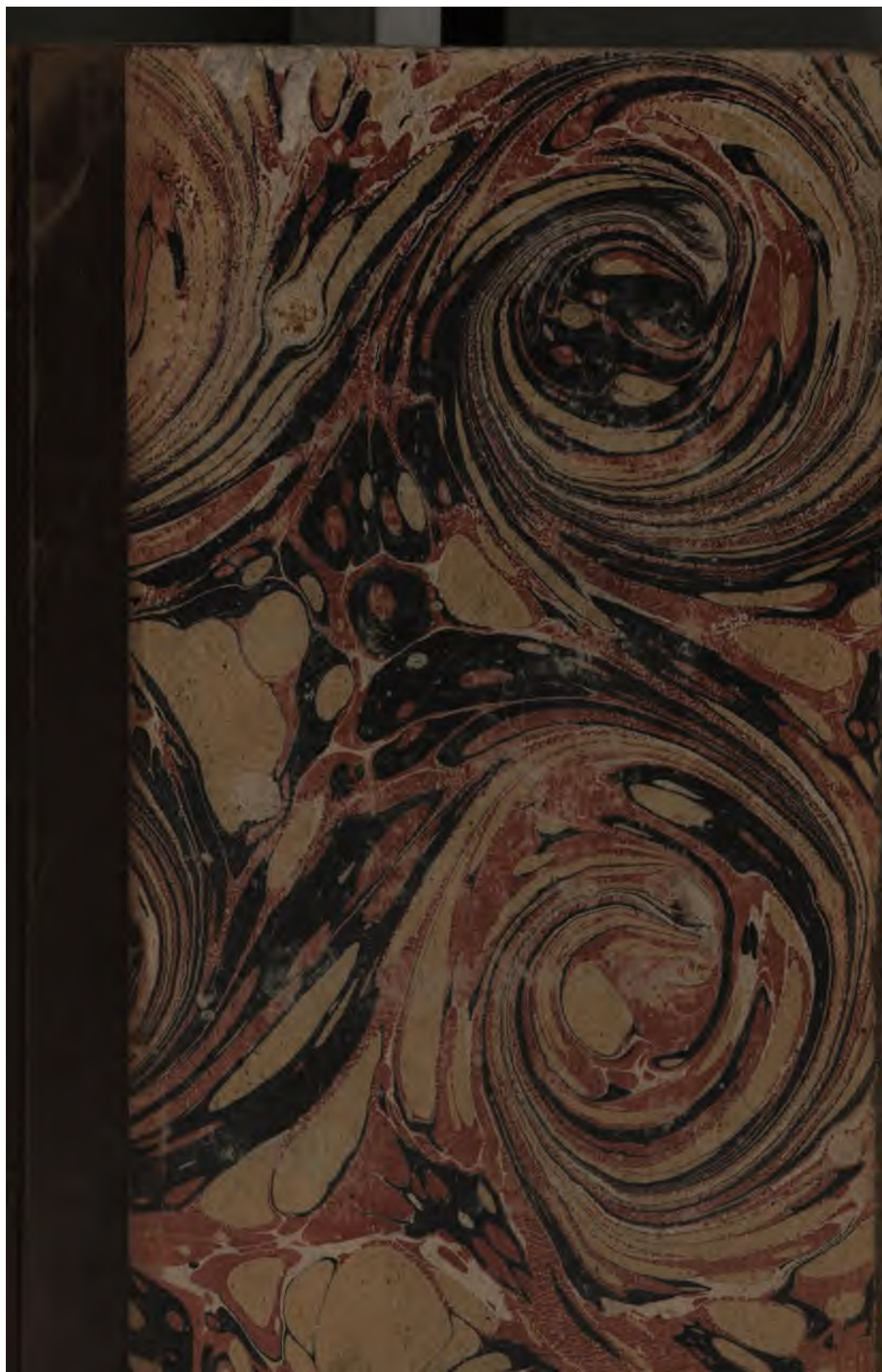
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Tracts

A NEW TRACT FOR THE TIMES.

THE
“CHURCH PRINCIPLES”
OF
NICE, ROME AND OXFORD,
COMPARED WITH THE
CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

A NEW TRACT FOR THE TIMES.

THE
“CHURCH PRINCIPLES”
OF
NICE, ROME AND OXFORD,
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CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
ON BAPTISMAL REGENERATION, LAY-BAPTISM,
THE ANCIENT MODE OF BAPTISM,
&c. &c.



BY A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,
and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”—GAL. v. 1.

LONDON:
B. FELLOWES, LUDGATE STREET.
1842.

1106.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE pages are not written for the learned, as they contain nothing which they do not already know ;—nor for the prejudiced, who “ would not believe though one rose from the dead : ” — but for those who have neither time nor inclination to read larger works.

The subject is divided into three parts :—
Baptismal Regeneration ;— Lay Baptism ;— the
Ancient Mode of Baptism. The whole showing what have been, and ever must be the tendency of what are now called “ Church Principles.”

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BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ—for by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Gal. ii. 16 and 21.) “Unto him that loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.” (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

THE Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are so simply beautiful in themselves, and so significant of what they are intended to represent, that it becomes a matter of surprise to find how soon they were wrested from their original designs, and compelled to bear a load of error.

It does not appear from Scripture that Baptism was mistaken or corrupted in the times of the Apostles, as there is no reproof to any Church for permitting it to be given by unauthorized persons, or in an improper manner. But the

Lord's table became a frightful scene of disorder, even in the Corinthian Church, which was under the frequent personal teaching of St. Paul. In rebuking them he never alludes to the doctrine of Transubstantiation (which, had it been true, he must have known), but censures them for the excesses of which they were guilty, for they had taken of the wine "till they were drunken!" (1 Cor. xi. 21.) Had that wine become the "real presence," it could not have had such an effect; for to say that the actual body and blood of Christ could by any possibility make a person lose his sober senses, and plunge him into a state of intoxication, is a blasphemous absurdity.

Such extreme wickedness being known to have existed in an Apostolical Church, shows that it is not what was *done* by a Primitive Church which is to be an example for imitation in succeeding ages, but what Christ himself *taught* and *said*, and his Apostles *wrote*, which must be the rule of faith and practice; otherwise every corruption of antiquity may be brought forward as worthy of being a model, however much it may be contrary to the revealed word of God.

The Epistle to the Romans was written by St. Paul A.D. 60, when he thanked God their "faith was spoken of throughout all the world;" yet five or six years afterwards, when he appeared the

second time before Nero, so completely had persecution scattered, or "love of the world" affected these Christians, that "at his first answer no man stood with him, but all forsook him." (2 Tim. iv. 16.) So that when "Paul the Aged" was in affliction and bonds, he was treated by them with the most cruel neglect. This Romish Church, which should have consisted of "faithful men," had become already a congregation of cowards and apostates. At what period she attained infallibility has yet to be learnt, for this scriptural notice of her state—the last on record—does not seem to enhance her claims to absolute unerring perfection; and in what year she was chosen by God to be the Director and Mother of all other Churches to the end of time, is an important fact which has still to be discovered, for St. Paul most clearly demonstrates that in his life her spiritual gifts were gone. At what time they were resumed, and vouchsafed with such plenary indulgence for the past, and such never-failing wisdom for the future, the Gospel does not say.

Many of the ancient Churches were reprimanded by the Apostles,—Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Thyatira, were severely admonished,—yet none of them fell into the gross errors of which the Church of Rome has been guilty.

The early Churches not only erred in practice, but held false opinions. Besides many which are reprehended by their inspired founders in their Epistles, there was one which obtained general credit—that of the end of the world being near at hand. Yet had the Scriptures been studied aright, the impossibility of that event taking place for an indefinite length of time might have been seen in the long train of prophecies which must be fulfilled ere the final consummation of all things. Although they had the Revelations of St. John for their perusal, and the express words of St. Paul (2 Thess. ii. 3.), “That day shall not come,” and could not arrive, “till the mystery of iniquity” (which had to proceed by slow degrees from the working out of “church principles”) had gone through its rise and progress, its decline and fall,—they nevertheless diffused their own misconceived ideas, which, although not very material in themselves, are sufficient to point out that the first Christians were liable to make mistakes. Those who live in this day can decide without further controversy whether the Primitive Church had formed a correct judgment on this subject, or otherwise.

Thus, in the lifetime of the Apostles there was flagrant vice in *conduct*, want of Christian charity in *practice*, and erroneous opinion in *theory*!

Why then should any Churches be held up as infallible, when it can be proved by a thousand circumstances they were perpetually wandering from the letter and the spirit of the Gospel?

Before the end of the second century lay baptism appears; which custom probably arose from a notion that baptism was necessary to salvation, and therefore might be given by any one, rather than endanger the safety of the soul by its omission. But nowhere in the Bible is there found any authority for teaching that *water* can justify the sinner, for from the whole tenor of Scripture it is clear, that baptism is *not* regeneration, or in other words, not a change from a state of sin to one of holiness by the application of water in that sacrament, but, as the 27th article hath it, “a sign of regeneration or new-birth, whereby the person is grafted into the Church*.” The sign is never the thing signified, the type cannot be the reality. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin, although an emblem of that shed on Calvary, which can. Neither does water remove pollution from the soul, though it be a symbol of purification. Nevertheless the Puseyites† are in agreement on this point with the Council of Trent, (both of them deriving their unerring wisdom, not so much from the

* See Note 1.

† See Note 2.

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Holy Spirit, as from the old fathers and councils,) and they define “a sacrament to be a thing subject to the senses, and possessing by divine institution, at once the power of signifying sanctity and justice, and of imparting both to the receiver*”—doubtless by the same sort of logic which could prove a clock which ticks the moments to be time itself. But both Tract-men and Councils may affirm much which cannot be borne out by the Word of God, for, by their own account, they give a sign which should be a reality likewise: yet if the sign and the thing signified do not invariably go together, they certainly cannot be one and the same. The sign in baptism may be well made and exactly performed, yet no grace may result from the action during the whole life of him who (it is said) in receiving the former necessarily had the latter. What is a gift?—a bestowment without price. The idea of a positive gift coming immediately from the Holy Ghost being of no use, no value, is inexplicable to those who believe in the quickening influences of the Spirit. “God said, Let there be light, *and there was light.*” Do not persons see, if they have the gift of eyesight?—do they not hear, if they have the gift of hearing? Undoubtedly they do; yet by the rule of *baptismal*

* See Trentine Catechism, on Sacraments, p. 14.

regeneration, the greatest boon which can be conferred on man is a negation,—no good, no benefit in the cases of millions of human beings !

In the Jewish church, circumcision was the appointed rite by which, as a sign, persons were made partakers of the covenants of God to that people ; yet this solemn introduction into the house of Israel did not make them “ Israelites indeed,” “ for he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly*.” (Rom. ii. 28.) This important institution was therefore null and void as to salvation “ without the answer of a good conscience.”

The female part of the nation had no public admission into the family of God, yet they were participants with their fathers and brethren in all spiritual and temporal blessings. Every Jew was circumcised, but every Jew was not regenerate. The act of circumcision could not metamorphose a heathen into a *believer* of Judaism. The rite was never given till the faith of Abraham was professed, when it became the sign of his adoption amongst the Hebrews. Afterwards the children also might be permitted to partake of the same privileges, not as being renewed in their nature, but as a pledge of assurance, that

by following the same faith, " they might obtain a like inheritance in the promises*."

In the Christian economy, baptism took the place circumcision had held in the Jewish, each in their respective dispensations being the entrance into the visible church—just as when an alien is naturalized, he takes an oath of allegiance, or submits to some form, whereby his adoption into the community is acknowledged. The ceremony is also a sign of admission to a share in the promises of God to his faithful people on certain conditions,—namely, on that of *obedience*. There is often in Scripture a most important duty concealed under the simplest observance. Thus, when Adam and Eve were placed in Eden, they had but one law to keep, which was forbearing to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; yet for committing this one act of disobedience against the express prohibition of God, " came sin and death with all our woe."

The institution of baptism is in itself of the easiest nature to perform; yet the omission of it, considered as a neglect of the Lord's command, may be a sin of great magnitude, although, like the crime of taking the forbidden fruit, it may seem on a cursory view, merely a trifling trans-

* Note 3.

gression. Baptism might also become a means of grace through the exercise of faith, when given to adults, but is no more regeneration to the Gentile than circumcision was to the Jew ; for the gift of salvation is not to the baptized (nor to the circumcised), but to " those who confess with their mouth and believe in their heart that Jesus is the Christ."

By regeneration, new-birth, justification, renewed nature, adoption (and such scriptural terms), *repentance for the past with faith in Christ is always to be understood*. An isolated text here and there must not be forced to sustain opinions contrary to the general and entire meaning of the inspired volume of Revelation : its whole design is to teach men they are sinners, and show them a way of escape from the wrath of God through the atonement of Christ and belief in Him ; but if *water* could cleanse from guilt, there would be no need for a Saviour's blood. Scripture should interpret Scripture : by taking parallel passages relating to any subject, and comparing them with each other, " the mind of the spirit " may be discovered ; for example (John iii. 5.), " Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John vi. 63.) " It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh

profiteth nothing." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) "Not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (Rom. ii. 29.) "But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." (1 Peter, iii. 21.) "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now also save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (Eph. ii. 8.) "By grace are ye saved through faith." (2 Tim. i. 9.) "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus." (John v. 24.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hath my *word*, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." (John xvii. 17.) "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy *word* is truth." (John vi. 40.) "Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." (Mark xvi. 16.) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (John iii. 18.) "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, *because* he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

(Acts ii. 38.) "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Luke xxiv. 47.) "And that repentance and remission of sins should be *preached* in his name among all nations." (Acts iii. 19.) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Rom. iii. 20.) "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight," &c. &c. (Acts x. 47.) "Peter said, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost?" In this case the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost were imparted *before* baptism; the outward ceremony therefore was not necessary as a *preparation* for the divine gift; yet these persons had not even entered the visible church; but as "the Lord knows them that are his," he saw their faith, and they were accepted as sheep of his fold, although they had not partaken of the initiatory rite which is now declared to be the *only* passport to heaven, and indispensable for salvation, if Augustine and Pusey are to be *law* instead of Christ's *Gospel*.

By careful observation of the foregoing passages of Scripture, it will be seen that belief in Christ is the sole and only way by which to ob-

tain pardon and everlasting happiness. Baptism is commanded, but nowhere is that ceremony declared to be the *cause* of regeneration ; if it be in any text conjoined with remission of sins, that remission is always said to be granted through Christ's atonement and satisfaction, not by the application of water. It is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned," but no such curse is denounced upon the unbaptized.

It is evident throughout the whole of the New Testament, that all adults *first* professed their belief in Christ, and then were baptized with their households and admitted into the visible church ; but if baptism *caused*, or gave regeneration, they would have been baptized purposely to obtain it, and might *afterwards* have professed their faith. Such an event never happened, for the acceptation of Christ as a Saviour was necessary ere the administration of the sacrament was allowed. Peter writes to the "elect," therefore the regenerate, who are so "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling* of the *blood* of Christ : " there is not one word here of the application of *water*, but that of *blood*, as a part of salvation.

So far from the Sacraments being positively stated in Scripture as being the only means of obtaining salvation, there are two other modes,

far more distinctly pointed out as the sources from whence the new-birth is derived ; these are the Word of God, as revealed in the books of Revelation, and the preaching of the Gospel. A person can no more be born twice spiritually than he can naturally ; if, therefore, baptism were regeneration, the rest might have been left to circumstances ; but the Psalmist says (and the words apply in a stronger sense to the New Testament), “ The law of the Lord is perfect, *converting* the soul.” The *Word of God*, and the *preaching* of the *Gospel*, being each addressed to the *mind* of the hearer, is the way by which the *soul* is reached by the influences of the *Spirit*.

“ Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“ Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”—John iii. 3 and 5.

James, i. 18. “ Of his own will begat he us with the *word* of his truth.”

1 Cor. iv. 15. “ For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the Gospel*.”

1 Peter, i. 23. “ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word* of God.”

Eph. i. 13. “ In whom ye also trusted, after that ye had heard the *word* of truth, the gospel of your salvation.”

Romans xvi. 25, 26. “ Now to Him that is of power to

stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the *Scriptures* of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God."

2 Tim., i. 9 and 10. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light *through* the Gospel."

1 Cor. i. 21. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."

These passages are quite as explicit and definite of grace being obtained through reading the Word of God and hearing the preached Gospel, as any which can be brought forward in support of baptismal regeneration, and are of more importance, seeing they are to be taken literally, without

figure or emblem. Now if the written or preached Word of God do not necessarily produce regeneration, is it to be expected that Baptism will?

The conversion of St. Paul was extraordinary; he was called by a voice from Heaven to be a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles (Acts ix.). Neither an apostle nor an evangelist was selected to baptize him; Ananias was merely "a disciple," probably a laic; yet, on a much less important occasion, Philip was taken by the Spirit into the desert to teach and baptize the Eunuch. The baptism of St. Paul was not according to "apostolic succession;" and it is more than strange, that *this* is the only instance in which the baptism of any of the apostles with *water* is specified. "When Ananias saw Paul (Acts xxii.), he said, Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." In the fuller detail of the transaction (Acts ix. 17.) it is stated, that on entering the house, Ananias put his hands on Saul, and in the name of Jesus gave him light, and at the same time "he was filled with the Holy Ghost." It must not be overlooked, that these circumstances *preceded* the act of baptism, for the ceremony was not bestowed *until* the Holy Ghost had been imparted; therefore the influences of the Spirit were not an essential portion of the sa-

crament, nor wanted to its completion, for it had been *previously* granted.

There can be no doubt, that *when* Saul was called by God to be a saint, he was "justified, adopted, renewed in his nature," and made "a new creature in Christ Jesus," before either the Holy Ghost or baptism had been given ; for these had not been bestowed until three days after the journey to Damascus, yet, in this interval, Ananias was told of the "great things" which were to be accomplished by the former persecutor. Baptism was necessary as an outward entrance into the visible church, and a sign and seal, by the washing of water, of the fulfilment of God's promises ; but if the "new and the contrite heart" had not been antecedently imparted, Saul might have remained for ever in a baptismal pool, without any change being effected by its application ; for "the body may be cleansed with pure water," *without* "the heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience."

If, when Ananias said unto Paul, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," he meant to tell him that the ceremony was the *cause* of his salvation, the miracle, which is usually considered the means and time of his conversion, might have been spared ; for if a simple rite, given by the hands of a man, were sufficient to

“create faith,” and make him “a temple of the Holy Ghost,” the light and the voice from heaven had no effect upon his heart; as by “Church principles” they were unavailing without baptism, and Ananias might just as well have regenerated him without the glorious manifestation from on high. If the future apostle were “justified and adopted,” not by the previous call of God, but by the actual bodily washing with water, it may be as undeniably affirmed that other passages *must* bear a similar interpretation, as they belong exactly to the same class of figures, which, in the language of Scripture, perpetually gave the name of that which it is meant to represent, as if it were the reality, not the emblem—*e. g.* “This Hagar is Mount Sinai,” “That rock *was* Christ.” No one ever imagined these *signs* were the things *signified*. Thus, when St. John writes to the seven Churches of Asia, and says, “Unto him who loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his own blood,*”—were succeeding ages to understand that not himself only, but all the saints whom he is addressing were absolutely washed or immersed in the blood which flowed from Christ’s body? “The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin”—but can any one suppose, that to purify the sinner it is necessary that “the blood of sprinkling” is to be showered upon him really from the crimson stream which descended from the Saviour’s

hands and feet? But if it is to be asserted that from the expression, "wash away thy sins," "actual and original sin" were then removed by the *outward* application of water, it is just as certainly true, that the saints in the Asiatic Churches were *literally* and absolutely washed in the actual blood of Christ. If one be taken *literally*, the other *must*. The phrases have precisely the same import, almost the same words; the sense of both entirely alike. The washing with water as an outward act is possible, the outward washing with Christ's blood impossible; nevertheless both were done either really or emblematically, for there is no difference in the mode of expression for either. It may be taken for granted the Christians at Smyrna, Laodicea, &c. had been baptized, that is, washed with water; but St. John definitely says their sins were washed away in the blood of Christ, therefore the water had not accomplished that blessing. To those who are satisfied with the allusive meaning of each phrase, the whole is comprehensible without any difficulty; but for those who still insist upon the positive justification by *water*, and refuse to accept the very same words when *blood* is to be the "laver of regeneration," the more strongly expressed texts upon the subject are arranged in columns, that the striking similitude of the passages may be clearly seen at once.

Eph. v. 26. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the Church) with the washing of water by the word." 1 John, i. 7. "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."

John xvii. 17. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." 19. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also should be sanctified through thy truth."

John xv. 3. "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

1 Cor. vi. 11. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." Rom. v. 9. "Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath to come."

Heb. xiii. 12. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Heb. x. 22. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Heb. xii. 24. "And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

1 Peter, i. 2. "Through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the *blood* of Christ, grace unto you."

Titus iii. 5. "According to his mercy he saved us, with the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Rev. i. 5. "Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Rev. vii. 14. "And have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

When the angel of the Lord (Acts viii.) spake unto Philip to go to Gaza, which is desert, and to join himself to the chariot, he then opened his mouth and began at the Scripture which the eunuch was reading, explained it, and "preached unto him Jesus." And as they went on their way they came to a certain water, when the eunuch requested Philip to baptize him. It must be here observed, that the evangelist, who had been miraculously sent to *teach* him, did neither mention nor advise baptism, nor administer the sacrament and tell him he was thereby "regenerated, and justified, and adopted;" but said, "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest." The eunuch replied, he did *believe*, whereupon they went into the water, and he was baptized.

The Apostles never speak of baptism until their hearers are prepared to receive it, by making profession of their faith; then they are fit to enter the visible Church. All adult baptism should proceed on these grounds, children being likewise partakers of the privilege for the father's

sake, and sharers in the same promises when the baptismal vows are kept.

If the ordinance of baptism be of vital importance, as an indispensable requisite in the salvation of mankind, why did not Christ and the Apostles give it to all those who came to hear them? for if the *mere* application of water by authorized persons will suffice with God for the purifying of the sinner, instead of a holy life and heart, why was not this simple easy mode resorted to by Him who best knew what was meant by the rite? and why was it so seldom given by his immediate successors, who took such unwearied pains "to *teach* all nations" ere they were allowed to be baptized? "The washing of regeneration" must be something very different from the *act* of baptism, or surely the Apostles would not so strongly have insisted upon "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

In St. John's Gospel (iv. 2.) it is expressly stated that "Jesus baptized not, but his disciples:" yet if baptism with water does or can convey such high spiritual gifts in every ordinary case, what wonderful effects might not have resulted from such a ceremony when performed by the Lord himself, who had "the Spirit without measure!" Had he meant any such grace to have ensued from the form of baptism, surely he would

not have withheld it on every occasion. (Luke v. 10.) Jesus said to the sick of the palsy, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee:" *faith*, not baptism, preceded the remission of sins. Christ did everything *perfectly*. If baptism were then absolutely necessary to, or a part of salvation, would not the cleansing sacrament have been first administered? for there was nothing to impede its being given. Yet in no instance, when he pardoned transgression, did he ever mention or command baptism.

Again, "the woman who was a sinner" (Luke vii.) was not baptized; yet twice did Christ say unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." No words could be more explicit than these were, to denote the full remission which was given;—"Thy *faith* hath saved thee; go in peace." Her good works were not applauded nor paid for, nor was there any intimation of baptism being expected or desired to supply any deficiency of God's power or grace.

These accounts have been on record from the time of Christ, and were then just what they are now; they seem most distinctly to convey the idea, not only of the compassion of Christ to the lost and guilty, but of the entire efficacy of his pardoning mercy without any aid or ceremony by men.

If baptism be the whole or even a part of regene-

ration, then Christ's atonement, satisfaction and forgiveness are incomplete and insufficient; for by neglect or accident a person might die without this rite, and thus the eternal condition of his soul be changed, *merely* from delay in receiving a form which is entirely the work of men's hands, although through faith he was a partaker of God's sanctifying grace!

Augustine maintained that all unbaptized people were lost: this, like many other ancient dogmas, was an opinion unsupported by Scripture; and as he was unacquainted with the secret decrees of God, he could not possibly know anything of the matter beyond what is revealed. This saint and father recommended the practice of surreptitiously baptizing any heathen children who could be met with, doubtless with the kind intention of regenerating and saving their souls; but as neither such young persons nor their parents had perhaps ever heard of the Christian religion, the ordinance could not by any possibility influence their hearts nor amend their lives.

There was however a diversity of opinion amongst the Fathers—

“Who shall decide when doctors disagree?”

Chrysostom thought it was *possible* there might

be remission for sin committed *after* baptism ; others did not. Dr. Pusey agrees with the latter party, and writes, “ the regeneration given in baptism, if lost, can never be restored.” If Christ had said this, the mournful tidings must have been credited as the truth ; but as He never spoke of justification in baptism, nor implied any wholesale condemnation on any such points, these assertions may pass without alarm.

As all the descendants of Adam inherit from him original sin, it is absolutely impracticable for any of them to exist without sinning ; and therefore, for divines, ancient or modern, to teach as gospel, that God appointed this institution to act as a complete snare, is to charge the Almighty with worse than foolishness ; for infants are always baptized without their own knowledge and consent, and to put them in a situation to lose their salvation by their baptism, is most cruel and deplorable. At a very early age children *do* commit wilful sin ; but to say such sin is never forgiven, is against the whole testimony of Scripture, which declares the “ Lord to be merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and ready to forgive ;” also, that “ Christ is able to save to the uttermost.” “ Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved,” at any time or place. “ Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious,” and

is he less merciful to the Christian than he was to the Jewish church, to whom he said, "All the day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people?" "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," is the tender invitation of Christ to the sorrowful. Was it meant as a mockery to those "who mourn?"

Almost all persons in this nation have been baptized in accordance with "Church principles." The act of baptism has "regenerated and gifted them with a new nature, adoption, citizenship in Christ's kingdom, and the inheritance of heaven*." Now if the baptized individual is purified from sin, and "made like unto an archangel or the seraphim," from whence does perpetual or daily sin arise? for as in heaven there can be nothing which "defileth," so it is imagined the spirits who "worship before the throne" are free from pollution, and therefore not very like the *baptized* people of England. Again, if a baptized soul be liable to transgress, is it expected that in the seventy years of a mortal's life, no sin that may be committed shall be pardoned, and that "there are no means of renewing to repentance those who have lost their baptismal pardon?" This may be Oxford divinity, but is neither apostolic

* Dr. Pusey's Letter, p. 124.

nor scriptural ; for St. John says, " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Further, the Tract-writers declare, " there are but two periods of cleansing—baptism and the day of judgment*." " The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." " To-day if ye will hear his voice." When Mahomet composed the Koran, he often stated which of the angels brought the particular revelation to him, or on what beast he rode on high and particular occasions, when upon his travels to obtain knowledge—if the Tract-men would be equally explicit as to the mode by which they arrive at their opinions, the public would rejoice to be put in possession of facts upon which the most important consequences depend.

Ambrose took also a melancholy view of the loss of baptism. It is somewhat remarkable, that every kind of religion or code of doctrines devised by men, is that of *fear* and *terror*. The Gospel of Christ is the only one which makes *love* the prevailing and guiding principle of action. This father added another link to " Church principles ;" each ring of the chain is separate and distinct, but all slipped into each other and soldered together make a heavy fetter. He believed not only in baptismal regeneration,

* See Note 4. Letter, p. 93. Pusey on Baptism.

but in the efficacy of prayers for the dead, as he pleaded with God for the soul of Valentinian, “who had died uninitiated, unregenerate, unjustified ;”—in other words, unbaptized. It is strange that any persons but the dying would receive baptism, when it was thought to be the *only* opportunity afforded for securing salvation, and also when such great danger attended the sins which of necessity must follow in after-life, even with the most conscientious. Those who best knew the corruption of their own hearts would be the last to take a sacrament which sealed their condemnation, and which, if postponed till the hour of death, not only cleansed the soul, but became a safe passport for heaven.

But Ambrose contrived a way of escape for those who died unbaptized ; for he says in the Oration*, “that the fervent *desire* of baptism had the same effect as the sacrament itself, and consequently, that the sins of the deceased prince being thereby cancelled, it was not to be doubted but from this life he had passed to eternal bliss.” What did this father mean, on whose opinions so much now depends ? He first intercedes with God to forgive the sins of the emperor, and then declares that “the desire of baptism” is just as good as the *reality* ! If so, Ambrose could not

* Amb. Orat. in Fun. Val.

possibly believe that the "divine efficacy" of baptism was derived from the episcopally ordained hands of those who bestowed the rite ; for when it was only in the *wish*, the *form* could not be a part of the salvation which is said to be thus obtained. It could be of no importance whether the person was baptized or not, when even the expression of anxiety to receive the ceremony was sufficient to ensure everlasting happiness. The desire of David to build the Temple was accepted, "because it was in his heart," and he had done all that God allowed him to do towards its erection ; but are the intentions of people equally meritorious, who having had in a long course of years daily opportunities of fulfilling them, yet never put them into execution, and are at length prevented by death from doing that which they might and ought to have performed long before ? In the case of Valentinian, the sacrament could have been obtained at any time, but was purposely deferred to the moment of death for fear of sinning after its reception. The Church principles of the *early* fathers are paradoxical beyond all comprehension.—Ambrose first declares an unbaptized man is lost, then prays for his soul ; and then he maintains that the *desire* of baptism in this very same lost individual is equal in power with the actual reception of it, and that the wish

alone saved him, and by it he went to heaven ! But if he did go there, how was it, seeing he was "unregenerate, unjustified?" Scripture, sense, and reason have no such inexplicable mysteries. These were the contradictory and erroneous doctrines taught by some of the first fathers, which led and ever must lead to the most fatal misconceptions of truth ; nevertheless these uninspired men are now held up as paragons of perfection and examples of faith and practice.

Does any one suppose, that when he stands at the bar of God, he is to be judged by the fancies of Ambrose, the notions of Augustine, or the opinions of the Oxford Tracts ? The conclusion of the completed volume of Revelation sums up in these decided words (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.), " If any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book ; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." And into the city of God " there shall in no wise enter he that maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

The life of St. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was spent and sacrificed in diffusing the knowledge of Christianity ; it may therefore

be supposed that he would have understood the full value of "baptismal regeneration," if it had been a truth imparted by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The sixth article truly says, "That holy Scripture contains *all* that is necessary to salvation;" if then this doctrine "cannot be *proved* to be *therein*, or is contrary thereunto, it is in no wise to be received, nor to be required of any man as an article of faith, or be thought requisite to salvation." St. Paul writes (1 Cor. i. 14 to 17.), "I thank God I baptized none of you (!), but Crispus and Gaius; and I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." Does this striking passage imply that he considered baptism and regeneration (in any sense) to be one and the same thing, or the former absolutely needful to salvation? He resided at that time a year and six months at Corinth, and yet he never thought it worth his while to give the rite, save in these instances. The whole time of the apostle was employed in preaching the Gospel: if the simple ceremony had possessed in itself such saving grace, would not he have dispensed it abundantly?

As he and his colleagues were incessantly engaged in teaching Christianity, and praying for

spiritual gifts to be showered down upon their hearers, they surely would have been always administering baptism if there had been any essential or inherent holiness connected with its reception ; but if the rite were really the “ primary instrument which creates faith to be what it is*,” it becomes a matter of surprise that this singularly easy mode of instilling truth, with all the Christian graces which are said to spring from it, was not eagerly seized upon by the men who personally heard Christ’s commands, and who should therefore have been aware of its intrinsic properties. The first promulgators of the Gospel were too anxious for the salvation of mankind to have omitted any means of improvement which had been appointed by their divine Lord ; yet on all occasions baptism was the *last* order given to their converts, never the *first* : therefore it may be concluded it was not deemed by them “ the instrument of creating faith,” for faith was *invariably* professed *ere* baptism was ever allowed to be received. The Apostles must have been either entirely ignorant of this plan for obtaining faith, or were most wicked to keep people from thus speedily securing it.

If a parent knew that his children were deeply infected by a prevailing disease, but was certain

* See Note 5.

that the simple application of a remedy which was in his own immediate power to bestow, would remove at once the fearful pestilence, would not he at once, and without delay, give the panacea? Were the Apostles less kind or more careless when they knew that sin was an universal plague, and yet never attempted to remove it by baptism? Had that simple institution been endued with such powers from on high, St. Paul would not have thanked God he had baptized none of them (but the few mentioned); for they who were "spent" in persuading men to embrace the doctrines of Christ (not with their lips, but with their hearts) would have been too glad to use the efficacious waters of baptism had they possessed any healing virtues for cleansing the pollutions of guilt from the soul. And were persons "justified by the communication of an inward, most sacred, and most mysterious gift" by an outward observance, "which, from the very time of their baptism, made them temples of the Holy Ghost*," there would have been no lack of its administration in every city visited by these first teachers of Christianity. These extraordinary benefits are still said to be in the Church; but whatever may be written by a Newman or a Wiseman upon the subject of the wondrous sanctity imparted in the

* Note 6.

sacrament to every receiver thereof, the very sight of a prison or the meeting a policeman is a tacit denial of the assumed fact, that "the evil spirit is cast out by baptism, and that Christ enters the soul and dwells therein, as in an archangel*!" Are archangels sinners? Are the temples of the Holy Ghost defiled by every crime? The Bible can never be made to support such affirmations or such self-evident absurdities, although many a page may be brought up from fathers or school-men to save a cause which needs such by-gone champions. But he who has the whole armour of God in his keeping need not fear the Philistines who defy the armies of Israel.

The sacraments instituted by Christ are both of them equally deserving of observance and respect. As he never vouchsafed to give baptism, it is impossible to judge what effects would have resulted from his performing it; but as he condescended not only to appoint, but also to administer, the Lord's Supper, the *question* of the "divine efficacy," (which is said to be an integral part of each ceremony,) becomes discernible.

The Lord's Supper was first given on a most solemn occasion; it was the last meeting with the Apostles before his crucifixion. If there ever was *inherent virtue* in the elements used at such

* Note 7.

times, or if a sacrament ever did possess in itself "divine efficacy" to cleanse from sin or justify a sinner, that, above all others, must have been the opportunity for its full manifestation. "He who spake as *never man* spake," "gave thanks." The emblems of his body and blood were distributed by an incarnate God; the whole scene, in word, action and intention, was absolutely perfect—Christ the giver, the Apostles the receivers. There was nothing wanting to complete its sanctity or excellence, and everything necessarily flowed from it that it was intended to produce.

"The twelve" were present at the sacred feast, where the Lord not only presided, but gave the significant *representations** of his approaching death. Yet the *bread* and *wine* blessed by the holy words of the great High Priest had no power to prevent the immediate entrance of Satan into the heart of Judas, who had no sooner "received the sop" than he left the sacred assemblage for the purpose of betraying his Master. He who had just taken the rite from the hands of Christ was so deeply filled with crime as to be called "a devil." If such an awful circumstance happened the moment after the Lord had himself dispensed the sacrament, is it possible there could have

* For perhaps a Romanist would allow that Christ did not eat himself.

been any "divine efficacy" in it ; or that he who instituted the ceremony had any idea of making the outward reception of any tangible element the cause or instrument of salvation ?

Although St. Peter partook of the holy ordinance, he also was in great danger, for Christ said, "Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee ;" and he did indeed fall into frightful guilt. The other Apostles seem to have been little benefited, for the supper was scarcely ended, when "a strife" began amongst them "who should be greatest."

The water in one sacrament is not more powerful than the bread and wine in the other, and if the latter, bestowed by Christ in person, was of no avail, assuredly the former, when imparted by his inferior creatures, cannot hope to be more efficacious. If "the Lord and giver of life" did not, with the sacred elements, necessarily convey the "divine efficacy" of salvation, who can ?

However important rites and ceremonies may be and are for specific purposes, yet *faith* arises from a distinct grace and gift, coming directly from the "Father of lights," entirely independent of *outward* observances ; for Judas "went to his place," *although* he had received ordination and the Lord's supper from the hands of Christ, and "the woman who was a sinner" was forgiven,

without any such privileges, by the free grace of God.

From these scriptural facts it may therefore be assumed that the sacraments, however valuable, being only outward forms, are not in themselves the causes of justification or regeneration, although given by God himself, but that his "grace is sufficient" without either of them; yet to neglect them would be sinful if they could be obtained.

The Apostles never presumed to say they had any power *in themselves* to work miracles on the body, much less to grant or give salvation to the soul. Whether they healed the sick or raised the dead, they never did it in their own name. Peter and John had been chosen and ordained by Christ; had been "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and were therefore more likely to have had the graces and gifts of the Spirit in a higher degree than men in later times. Yet when they were at the beautiful gate of the Temple, and cured the lame man, Peter said to the surprised beholders, "Why marvel ye, as though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of our fathers has glorified his Son Jesus; and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man to walk." (Acts iii. 12 to 16.) Neither Peter nor the "beloved disciple" ever laid claim to the gift of working miracles by

their own ordination, or any inherent virtue derived therefrom. If they had not the lesser power of healing in themselves, it is not probable they had the greater,—that of dispensing salvation; and what they did not possess they could not transmit to others, for where there is no beginning there can be no succession.

As the Apostles seldom baptized, and never claimed the divine prerogative of renewing the nature or forgiving and justifying the sinner, it was impossible they could teach or know "*baptismal* regeneration," which professes to do all these.

The descent of the Holy Ghost and the influences of the Holy Spirit were two distinct modes of operation for different purposes. The former was bestowed by the laying on of hands, and imparted the gift of working miracles, as in Acts vi. 6, 8. When the deacons were ordained the Apostles laid their hands on them, and "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." The latter was the converting grace of God on the soul, without any outward and visible sign, no *form* being ever used to grant remission and pardon: thus (Matt. ix. 52.) "Jesus said, Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Baptism, as being instituted and commanded by Christ, should on no account be omitted; the

privilege of belonging to the visible Church, and being allowed to claim, through faith and obedience, the blessings promised by God to his people, should never be lightly esteemed; but to make this sacrament a *cause* why salvation should be, or must be given to the unbeliever or unconscious, is contrary to Scripture and common sense.

But if there be that divine efficacy in baptism which does produce real regeneration (for a beneficial holy influence is expressed by that word), and if the proper administration of it be confined to an episcopally-ordained body of clergy, who never give it without imparting a *renewed nature*, how does it happen that the Italians, Spaniards, &c., who have had these inestimable advantages for centuries (with no "Reformation" to disturb the succession), should be the most profligate infidel nations in the world? What benefit has resulted from their *baptismal* regeneration, as it regards their moral conduct here or their salvation hereafter?

Bacon recommends, that in every practicable case a theory should be put to the test of facts and experiments: try the doctrine of baptismal regeneration by his sagacious plan, (for an *inward* cause should produce an *outward* effect, spiritual gifts being intended not only to improve the

heart, but amend the life ;) and if neither be altered in any degree, no cause can possibly have been in operation.

Millions of people are at this moment living in Europe who have received orthodox baptism from "apostolical successors," and yet are in a state of open wickedness and unbelief. The deduction is plain: if these millions had been "justified, adopted, *renewed in their nature*, regenerated," by the sacrament being so piously given, they must necessarily be in a condition of faith and holiness. A "greater than Solomon" says, "By their fruits ye shall know them; for men do not gather figs of thistles, nor *can a good tree* bring forth *evil fruit*." "And the fruits of the Spirit" (or regeneration) "are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." "The fruits of the flesh are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." (Gal. v. 19 to 23.) The latter part of the passage surely cannot apply to or describe regenerated Christians who have had a *new nature* put into them, and "who are made like unto the Seraphim before the throne!" "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of

God." "Little children, let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous ; he that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." (1 John, iii. 7, 8, 10.)

Almost all persons in Christendom are by baptism brought into the visible Church, but the great mass of the community are not in a state of salvation, if any judgment may be formed of their inward mind from their outward conduct, and their exact conformity with the description quoted above from the Epistle to the Galatians. Yet Dr. Hook says, "Regeneration comes only once in or through baptism, and though suspended as to its effects and benefits, cannot be totally lost in the present life."

Simon Magus may be adduced as exactly proving the reverse of this Puseyite proposition (Acts viii.). He had heard Philip preach, professed to believe, was baptized, and remained with the evangelist, wondering and beholding the miracles which were done ; yet on thus entering the visible Church, so little had his heart been changed by the reception of the rite bestowed by the holiest hands, that he thought the gift of the Holy Ghost could be bought with money. It might have been supposed this error had arisen from ignorance, had not Peter in reply said, "Thy money perish

with thee, for thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of *iniquity* ;” but if this truly orthodox baptism had been regeneration and new birth, he could not have been in such an awful depth of sin.

Again, the Thugs in India are a class of religious murderers, associated for the purpose of offering sacrifices to their deity (Kali), whose delight is in human blood. These priests of Moloch belong to all castes and situations in society, and are unparalleled for their treachery, deceit, and cruelty ; they take any vocation or disguise to accomplish their designs. Suppose, what is extremely probable, that a Thug should assume the character of an earnest inquirer into the truths of Christianity ; he is perhaps a Brahmin, and his alliance with the infamous sect unknown ; after receiving instruction he professes his belief in the doctrines of Scripture, breaks his caste, and is baptized by an episcopal clergyman. The Thug took this sacrament to execute his deeds of slaughter the more certainly and unsuspectingly. If the influences of the Spirit be a component part of baptism, this man (and every other who may receive it) must of necessity be benefited whether such be his intention or not, because, according to Dr. Pusey*, “ by the faith of the Church ” (which

* Dr. Pusey’s Letter, p. 112, and Note 9.

kindly supplies the want of faith either in unconscious infants or wicked recipients) he has been gifted with a "new nature, adoption, citizenship in Christ's kingdom, and the inheritance of heaven." All these blessings are *named* as actually part and parcel of the act of baptism. The man in short is made a saint. Now if this miraculous change accompanied the ceremony of baptism, would it be possible *this* Christian should be a vile murderer immediately after its administration? And yet he is precisely the same in practice and conduct that he ever was. The sacrament was gone through for a specific purpose, to further his own ends, and it left his heart and mind just what they previously were, although "the outward and visible sign," and the entrance into the Church, were all performed in the most correct manner.

The Lord Jesus commanded all nations to be taught and baptized, but he neither said nor implied, that even if they were instructed, and partook of the rite, they were thereby saved. What then does the soul gain by it? It is a positive ordinance of Christ's appointment, and binding upon Christians to the end of time, and a *sign* of promises to be fulfilled to those who act according to his precepts; but the whole heathen world might have the waters of baptism poured upon

them by authorized persons, and yet remain unfit for heaven. The influences of the Holy Spirit are imparted to cleanse, enlighten and purify the heart, not to act as a *charm* to give salvation to those who neither value nor practise righteousness.

When the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, first received the Holy Spirit, they had ocular demonstration of its descent upon them; they *felt* and *knew* its power, and the wondrous change wrought on their minds, and it was always evident some great effect had been produced, *for* they spake with tongues and healed the sick. Since that event no supernatural appearance has been manifested, and the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost have ceased; yet countless numbers have participated in the *influences* of the Spirit, not from any outward sign or attestation from above, but from the internal conviction of their own changed hearts and lives.

Where nothing is *ever* felt, nothing can have occurred; but those who are "washed and sanctified and purified" must be aware of their own altered condition, otherwise what is or may be called regeneration is only a supposition and delusion; for a state of repentance, succeeded by holiness, is certainly capable of being distinguished from that of indifference and sin.

The works of God, whether in grace or nature, are always perceptible to some faculty of the mind or sense of the body. The change from sorrow and remorse to peace and forgiveness can certainly be felt ; the transition from pain to ease is no mistake to the relieved sufferer ; the odour which wafts from the flower is perceived ; the slightest breeze upon the slumbering lake is as plainly seen upon its calm surface as if the tempestuous hurricane had caused "the waves to toss themselves." The ship answereth to the helm at once ; the flash of the glittering sabre, when drawn from the scabbard, is instantaneously visible, and the wound inflicted by its keen edge is known at the moment. In the works of art or nature the change is at *once* apparent ; in the operations of *grace*, is no alteration discernible to the mind of the object acted upon ? "For the word of God (Heb. iv.) is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Nothing can be more subtle and inexplicable than magnetic influence. Everywhere present, and always in action, though itself unseen, its effects are palpable ; the most careless eye can at once observe the declination of the compass, and

its slightest variations be detected. When God bestows the more extraordinary gift of his Holy Spirit, it is equally invisible; but is it possible there should be no result from such a cause? and that when his regenerating grace is imparted, the operation should in *any* instance remain unknown and unthought of to the possessor? Shall the Creator allow the most mysterious workings of nature to be exhibited in their results to all, and yet act so secretly upon the soul as to produce neither sensation, understanding, nor apprehension in the person on whom the change is wrought, nor the least alteration nor improvement appear in a heart which has received the Holy Spirit *purposely* to effect that change? When God created man he “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul” (Gen. ii.); the Spirit is therefore direct from the Almighty. Shall the pervading influence of magnetism be always acting upon the surface of the earth, and by its unknown agency accomplish every intended design, and yet the more ethereal, refined, undying essence, called Spirit, proceeding from God himself, be insensible to the workings of the Holy Ghost upon it? If it be so, then God is more powerful in nature than in grace, and the hills and valleys, the skies and seas have more of his omniscient care than the immortal soul, which is

formed for eternity ; for the former are *sure* to be acted upon by the laws of nature, but in the miraculous and vaunted results of *baptismal* regeneration, no renovation nor amendment is produced by the supernatural power which is thus wasted and unavailing. But were it *really* given, and all persons by baptism “were made like unto the seraphim and archangels, which worship before the throne,” there would be no sin, no repentance needed, no remission required. It is useless pursuing such an argument ; any one aware of the general wickedness of mankind, must confess that baptized Christendom is *not* in a state of holiness nor angelic purity ; therefore it is certain and uncontradictable, that no such gifts were vouchsafed in baptism, either immediately from the Holy Spirit, or obtained “by the merits and faith of the Church.”

Each feeling of the mind is known to the individual, and every result of natural causes is discovered by its effects ; it is not, therefore, probable that this sacrament should alone, of all God’s works and ways, be too incomprehensible to be known, felt or understood in almost every instance, if there were any, and that the blessing of a renewed heart should arise from other causes in after-life, but seldom, *if ever*, from baptism. The *conduct* of men is neither an abstract idea nor a

spiritual doctrine, but an outward circumstance which may be judged of by any : the full assurance of faith is one thing, a holy life and conversation another ; but he who in *any degree* partakes of the former, is sure to exhibit the latter ; and if there be no manifestation of godliness in external deportment, it will be in vain to say there is a renewed nature. " Grapes do not grow on thorns."

The influences of the Holy Spirit are a solemn reality, not brought down from above at the beck of any mortal by the application of water, but are the free gift of God as seemeth him best. The unconscious babe is sensible of no change, and the thoughtless adult is no better for the rite ; yet if regeneration formed an integral and inseparable part of baptism, conversion must be the inevitable consequence of its reception in any state of mind ; nevertheless the baptized child is just as wayward in infancy, as rebellious in youth, as that one who is unbaptized. If baptism did regenerate, there must be an actual and palpable difference between the two, yet daily experience and observation can discover none.

The French, at the time of the first revolution, had all received orthodox baptism from episcopal hands. The succeeding generation, in throwing off all outward forms, probably did not observe

this ; but do the present (perhaps for the most part) unbaptized people seem more ferocious, unprincipled, or profligate than those in and just after the reign of Louis XVI? If Mr. Newman be right, there should be a very important distinction seen between those who were made holy as archangels, and those who have had no such purification ; yet the men who " could not lose their regeneration " did not seem to have had therewith many holy influences.

As no *general* results of the want of baptism can be observed in the nation, perhaps a *particular* analysis, to test the efficacy of its virtue in one individual case, may be allowed. Nice, Rome and Oxford write, " There is no salvation without valid baptism." Robespierre was so baptized, therefore " regenerated, justified, adopted, and made a citizen of heaven ;" the " regeneration he received in baptism could never be wholly lost," because " the evil spirit was cast out, and he became pure as the seraphim ;" yet his cold-blooded cowardly ambition deluged his country with gore. " *Grace* was conferred by the sacrament of the new law by its own power (*ex opere operato*) ;" he was therefore in a state of salvation by the wonderful operation of the application of baptism, and (as the Scripture says, " by grace are ye saved ") by its powers Robespierre was of course

taken at death "to eternal bliss," although he died in a state of intolerable wickedness. The last act of this "regenerated, justified, adopted archangel," was attempted *suicide*; yet "from the time of his baptism he had been a temple of the Holy Ghost," and "was then gifted with a new nature" "by the mysterious and inward gift which creates faith;" yet, notwithstanding all this, his name is a proverb for everything which is cruel and horrible. "There are but two periods of cleansing, baptism and the day of judgment." From the life and character of this revolutionary leader, it has appeared what the first *cleansing* was worth; the second, which is hereafter, not being a tenet of Holy Writ, is known nothing of by an "Ultra-Protestant," who disbelieves in purgatory and the efficacy of prayers for the dead.

But although a whole empire be in such a state of demoralization as not to exhibit the holy renovation which baptism is said to invariably produce on the receivers of the ceremony, it is not wished that any injustice should be done towards those who advance the opinion of regeneration and baptism being one and the same thing. It may be presumed that the Oxford Tract writers are so deeply immersed in study as to have no knowledge of passing events, and dynasties may rise and fall unheeded. Whilst they are arranging

“ Church principles ” from ancient sources, they may not be aware that in Christendom the majority of *baptized* people are as sinful and profligate as the *unbaptized* Turks, which is more than unaccountable if there be holy undying influences imparted in any baptismal service. But as the Puseyites doubtless feel in themselves all which they state *must* arise from this sacrament (although they do not seem to understand such results do not *usually* take place in others), it is with them a matter of experience ;—he, who has been since the dawn of his earliest perceptions in the condition of a seraph, kindly judges of others by himself, and naturally supposes that baptism having done so much for his soul, it has acted in like manner upon others ;—he, who from his infancy has felt that, “ by an inward and mysterious gift,” “ he was made a citizen of heaven, and justified and regenerated ” in the moment of baptism, has certainly a right in the judgment of charity to believe all orthodox baptism bestows equally happy effects every time it is given ;—he, who was “ freed from both original and actual sin ” by the application of water, and “ made thereby a temple of the Holy Ghost,” may be allowed to tell of its marvellous virtues ; and he, who at his “ first cleansing ” was so completely renovated, “ that Christ dwells in him until he

has been made like unto an archangel" (although not glorified), is ready for "eternal bliss."

All those who enjoy personally such blessings arising *entirely* from the act of baptism, are more highly favoured than St. Paul ever was; for though he was caught up into the third heavens, yet he never speaks of himself as being "made like unto the seraphim," but modestly says, "I have not attained, nor am already perfect." St. Paul had been baptized, but he does not appear to have had either inspired or intuitive knowledge respecting the "divine efficacy of the sacraments." The doctrine did not arise until the canon of Scripture was closed, for there it is invariably written, "justification is by faith."

The prophet Samuel and St. John the Baptist are neither proofs nor examples for the rest of the world

"to lay a flattering unction to their souls,"

to expect safety from any initiatory ceremony; these remarkable individuals were called, one by the voice of God, the other by the direction of the angel, to the service of the Lord, and showed throughout their whole lives, from early childhood till death, that they were chosen for particular purposes.

According to the sublime and significant scene

in the Revelations (vii.), “ they who stand before the throne of God, have washed their robes in the *blood* of the Lamb.” The water of baptism might be deemed a more expressive emblem of purification, but it is not even alluded to by St. John. The power of cleansing from all sin is ever declared to lie in the blood of Christ, and “ without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22.) ; “ for a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ Jesus” (Gal. ii. 16.).

BAPTISMAL RITES.

“ One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.”—Ephes. iv. 5.

IN the former chapter it has been proved that the Tract-school doctrine of Regeneration being identified with Baptism is unscriptural, unreasonable, and contradicted by plain facts. This being clearly established, it is of comparatively little importance whether the Primitive or Romish Fathers agree with the modern Puseyites in an opinion which Scripture, reason and facts concur in disproving. Those who are not satisfied with Scripture and reason and facts, may have recourse to the Fathers ; but we deny that they can adduce so unanimous a voice of those who are denominated Fathers, as to add any weight to the adverse scale, even if the question at issue could be so decided. On the contrary, we assert, and we can prove, that the baptismal practices of the

Fathers are quite as deficient in unanimity as in reasonableness and scripturalness.

Dr. Hook says, "it is a first principle in the Church of God, that no one has a right to execute any function of the ministry till he has been lawfully invested with the ministerial office." This will be granted by every well-constituted society of Christian men. But how did it happen that one of the greatest of the Fathers, Athanasius, not only deviated from this rule in the instance of baptism, but afterwards justified and approved the action? St. Ignatius had said that it was not lawful to baptize without the presence of a bishop. But St. Athanasius, we are told, administered the rite of baptism, when himself a child, to one of his playfellows, and afterwards forbad the rite to be repeated. Does this look like an unbroken series of opinion and practice? The Primitive Fathers, in agreement with Ignatius, appear to have corrupted the decent and orderly observances of Scripture in the matter of baptism by too great strictness, namely, in requiring episcopal baptism, which is nowhere required in the New Testament. The later, but still early Fathers, with their Roman Catholic successors to the present time, have, in agreement with Athanasius, corrupted the sacrament of baptism by too great remissness, allowing indiscriminate lay-baptism to a strange

extent. There does not seem to have been any want of propriety in performing the rite of baptism in the days of the Apostles, for there is neither rebuke nor admonition on this subject to any of the churches. But no sooner were they gone to their reward, than the assumption of rights which had no authority from Scripture began; and the rite of baptism, having been first made unscripturally strict, afterwards became even more unscripturally relaxed in decency and order.

The bishops of Rome maintained the validity of baptism given by heretics, A.D. 256. Upon this subject a great contest took place, which rent the Church in two parts; the one headed by Stephen, 22nd Bishop of Rome, the other by Cyprian. The latter maintained the baptism given by heretics was null and void. Stephen insisted that when the sacrament was administered by heretics of any sect or persuasion, it was valid. The whole Church was divided in opinion; but until this time it had created no actual schism, each bishop conforming therein to the practice of his own particular Church. Jubinianus wrote to Cyprian respecting the discussion, who replied at great length, giving all the arguments on his side of the question, which Austin in his books on baptism confutes. Cyprian conducted the dis-

pute with great temper and moderation, leaving all the bishops or councils at liberty to embrace or reject his views at pleasure. Indeed the point in dispute had been canvassed *long before* this period, and differently settled in different provinces. The practice of re-baptism was followed by the Churches of Cappadocia, and the other provinces of Asia, which was confirmed in a council held at Iconium, consisting of all the bishops of Cappadocia, Galatia, Cilicia, and the adjoining districts. The bishops of Pontus and Egypt agreed with them; but all the bishops of Gaul, Italy and Spain were of a contrary opinion and followed the contrary practice. The Primitive Churches were nearly equal in the division. Does this look like an unbroken series of opinion and practice? To produce the writings of *some* of the Fathers who objected to lay-baptism, in opposition to the writings of *other* of the Fathers who allowed it, is only to state in other terms what we have already stated in our own, viz. that there is *not* an "universal consent," that there was *not* "an unalterable irreformable practice" amongst the Fathers. Did the one or the other practice wait for the consent of the Oxford Tract school, in order to become henceforth and for ever unalterable and universal? In the fourth century, St. Athanasius, when a boy,

gave the rite in a mere frolic to some children in the street for their amusement, and when he became a bishop forbade the iteration of it, as his predecessor in the see had done also, deeming that performance of it sufficient. If regeneration accompanied such irreverent baptism, it is indeed passing strange.

There is much difficulty for plain common sense to understand the paradoxical meaning of the Oxford Tract writers on this as well as other subjects. They insist upon the high prerogatives of episcopal ordination being absolutely necessary for the correct administration of the sacraments ; will allow none to be Christians in deed and in truth but such as receive the rite from their hands ; and the utmost limit to which their charity can extend, is to trust in the mercy of God, but with faint hopes that people baptized by any other persons can be saved ; yet at the very same time they are forcing upon all the “ Church principles ” of the Fathers as a paramount standard and guide, although these very “ principles ” are the source from whence lay-baptism with all its irregularities has proceeded ; that lay-baptism, be it added, against which they most inconsistently dissent and protest.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, which demands consideration, that in the details of the

baptism of St. Paul (the only instance recorded of an apostle's baptism, and which was done by the absolute direction of God), the sacred ordinance was given by the hands of a layman; for Ananias could be in no other capacity from his being expressly denominated "a disciple,"—"a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews who dwelt there." (Acts xxii. 12.) This at once proves that lay-baptism is not a vital error, for God cannot be the author of sin; nor can there be such exclusively beneficial efficacy in this rite, as administered by ordained men, when the chief Apostle to the Gentiles was baptized, by the command of God, by a layman's hands. Baptism by women and children, Jews, heretics and infidels, is so evident a profanation of the sacrament, that they who practise it may defend it, together with their own infallibility, as they best can by the records and usages of Fathers, Councils and Popes. Let it not be supposed for a moment, that in denying the peculiar and exclusive efficacy of episcopal baptism to be scriptural, we assent to the disorderly and indecent practices of those who have gone into the opposite extreme; but we contend that the Fathers are divided in this matter—that they are not unanimous; and we contend that the Puseyites are dissenting from both these parties,

who in their day were protesting against each other. Does this look like an unbroken series of opinion and practice?

If Oxford Tract opinions are true (however inconsistent with their vaunted authorities), what becomes of the indefinite number of souls which have been baptized by laics under the sanction and authority of Councils and Fathers? If none are or were in a state of salvation but those who have been baptized by a certain community or division of the Christian Church, their souls must be lost; and this entirely from the false doctrines and practices of Councils and Fathers. Otherwise—that is, if these souls were not lost—why may not lay-baptism suffice for salvation, if not for decency and order, *now*, if it did *then*? How may the Puseyites presume to say, against antiquity, that it is now invalid, when it has been the established custom of the “Church Catholic” for upwards of seventeen centuries? Is there any new revelation which points out what may be altered or omitted in ancient usage, to suit the schemes of this new sect? If there be none, they must either go on with the stream which brings down lay-baptism to this day, and permit every man, woman and child to baptize, or they must declare the Councils and Fathers were wrong, and inferior to the Scriptures in authority. They

must also state whether regeneration can now be given by laics, as was taught (by acquiescence in lay-baptism) by the ancient Church, or they must confess that ancient Church, those Holy Fathers, were erroneous in allowing indiscriminate baptism.

Dr. Hook thus endeavours to get out of these difficulties: he says, a person having had lay-baptism, "on returning to the unity of the Church was received without a repetition of the sacrament, but was endued with remission and the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the bishop's hands in confirmation, these spiritual gifts being those which were wanting in the applicant's lay-baptism*," and being received at confirmation as "a compensating gift." Dr. Hook quotes Leo and Augustine in support of this opinion, but entirely *forgets* any scriptural references which could show that confirmation was necessary to complete *valid* baptism. If confirmation could have supplied *any* and every deficiency in baptism, Cyprian and the Eastern Churches need not have troubled themselves about the re-baptization of heretics, when the former contained such efficacy in itself as to supply all that was wanting in the latter. Cyprian lived some time before Austin, and *that* "Church principle" had probably not arisen in his day. But supposing

* Note 9.

(merely for the sake of argument) that confirmation has the power of making up for certain defects in lay-baptism, the Primitive Church, by its authorized permission of the rite, has still to answer for the lost souls of all these persons thus baptized who could not obtain the "compensating" ceremony. In older times it is probable that only infants, the sick and dying, were baptized by laymen: now the circumstances of the *latter* rendered their confirmation impossible; baptism therefore, in their case, was of no avail, and all of these persons were in consequence unpardoned, and punished everlastingly; and he for whom Christ died, who had repentance, faith, and good works, went to eternal perdition for lack of an episcopal hand! Although the Church sanctioned and enjoined lay-baptism as sufficient, yet, for want of this momentary external application, God might not and could not save him for whom the Saviour had shed his most precious blood! This is the inevitable consequence of these unscriptural dogmas, and that "wholesome and comfortable doctrine," Justification by faith, is set at nought; and what the Almighty has distinctly stated as *truth* is turned into a *lie*, for the pitiful object of increasing the supposed sanctity and superiority of the priesthood.

The question as to the exact mode in which

baptism should be given, is another and distinct branch of the subject, not intended to be brought forward here ; but its being left indefinite in the New Testament may show that it cannot be a matter of vital importance ; whether, for example, it was by immersion or affusion is not specifically stated. Probably it was administered in both ways, as it is scarcely likely that in the prison, and in every house in which baptism was administered, there were baths or pools of water into which adults could be plunged. Ananias said unto Paul, " Arise, and *wash* away thy sins ;" but in the phraseology of Scripture this does not always mean immersion. When Jesus *washed* the feet of the disciples, it is certain the *washing* was merely of the feet, for Peter says, " Not my feet only, but my hands and my head."

Amongst the Jews the washing of the hands and feet was an emblem of entire purification ; as Exod. xxx. 21, " Lo they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not." Again, the Jews also used *sprinkling* both with water and blood (Exod. xxiv. 8.), " Moses sprinkled the people with blood." And Numbers, xviii. 19, the unclean were sprinkled with water. It is evident that Christ, by his own example and precept, considered that the partial outward washing signified a typically entire cleansing, for

he says (John xiii. 10.), "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." As Christianity progressed there was still the same necessity for adult baptism (which from the earliest ecclesiastical record seems to have been by immersion); but as the sick and dying could not have borne such ceremony, they must have been affused, which was equally valid. To refer once more to the baptism of the children by Athanasius: as that was *done in the street* in play, it must have been by *sprinkling* or crossing; nevertheless it was deemed orthodox baptism. As it appears that both modes were equally lawful and valid, it only remains that each "should be fully persuaded in his own mind;" remembering also the converse of this good rule, namely, "not to put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way," by converting questions which are left indifferent by the Scriptures into questions of vital importance.

It is not the design of this small publication to enter upon the puerilities of the Greek Church, nor the more stately pageantry of the Romish, in the service of baptism (although both of them deduce their corruptions from the Nicene Church); still it is not entirely foreign to the subject under consideration to present a single illustration, by

way of proving to what an extreme length error may proceed when the word of God is not the *only* standard of right and wrong.

The baptism of bells is an old and continued practice in the Papal Church. In the month of April in the present year, 1841, the head of the Church-principle school—the Pope of Rome—baptized a bell in the Sistine Chapel. The form used on such occasions is this:—After the gorgeously dressed priests have arrived (the Pope seated), the candles been lighted, and all is arranged, “the piece” begins with chanting: Latin prayers are then said, to consecrate water in a basin, which is then carried to the bell (for if the mountain cannot go to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain); the Pope or highest dignitary in attendance dips a brush into the water, with which he makes a cross, saying, “Let this sign be consecrated in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” By another priest the bell is crossed all over, and wiped dry; then succeed other crossings with oil, all to be wiped off; incense is consecrated and wafted over and inside the bell: other prayers are then read, most of them ending—“That Thou wouldest be pleased to rinse, purify, and sanctify and consecrate this bell with thy heavenly benediction.” A name mentioned by the godfather and god-

mother is given, who make promises and vows on its behalf; presents are offered to and put around the bell, which is then ready for suspension, and duly prepared for its *high* duties, which are scaring away demons and delivering souls from purgatory; these wonderful virtues its clangour possesses from the extraordinary power bestowed and received at its orthodox baptism! It is not possible to imagine a more complete mockery of Christ's sacrament than this contemptible scene, nor a more impious desecration of an institution appointed for the holiest purposes.

As baptism is declared by Romanists to be regeneration, and believed by Puseyites to be one and the same thing, and more especially so if performed by episcopally-ordained persons, it matters not, when such consequences are sure to follow its correct administration, when, or to whom, or to *what* it is granted.

In the baptism of bells there are all the essentials of valid baptism—the invocation of the Trinity, with the application of water by priestly hands. If regeneration must result from such a ceremony, is it supposed the inanimate object just cast from the metal has become a living soul capable of spiritual enjoyment? If such impious absurdity is not supposed, then baptism, in its

highest form, may be used without any effect. The whole affair, in opinion and in practice, is quite in character with Anti-Christ. Either the bell became conscious, by the divine efficacy of the sacrament*, or the exhibition was a wicked intolerable imposition; for to invoke the quickening influences of the Spirit upon a thing which neither had nor could have life, is as contrary to Scripture and reason, as it is in perfect unison with Popery and her "Church principles."

For those who pretend that the repetition of a few words *can* accomplish the miraculous change of a wafer into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is nothing very astonishing in the fact that blessing and crossing and baptizing a bell should make it capable of performing functions which a layman may in vain envy! When the former can be credited, the latter may also, for one is not at all more supernatural than the other, and any "lying wonder" may be believed when the evidence of the senses is put entirely out of the question. But it ill becomes a Church whose services are a profanation of Scripture to taunt any Protestant community of orthodox believers in the great truths of Christianity with either folly or weakness. None of these communities profess to have infallibility, therefore

* Note 10.

any error should be pardoned in their case as the result of poor judgment. But how shall such practices be justified in those who lay claim to infallibility? Must the common sense of Protestants, or the time-honoured practices of Catholics give way? And where do the Puseyites intend to stop in their approach to Rome?

But were the baptismal rites of the earlier Fathers so reasonable and scriptural as to put to shame these practices of later Fathers? Leaving all illustrations but one, which immediately bears upon the subject in hand, it is sufficient to mention, that in the writings of the Fathers a most extraordinary custom is discovered, which commenced about the third or fourth century. It is this:—That every person, when baptized, either by immersion or affusion, was divested of clothing!! Revolting as this may seem, it is a fact as certain as ecclesiastical testimony and authority can make it, that all people—men, women, or children—were *entirely stripped of their garments* at the reception of the rite, because it was believed the sacrament was more efficacious when the neophyte was completely undressed*. If, therefore, antiquity be a sufficient reason for the re-establishment of a religious usage, here is one

* Note 11.

which was practised for more than a thousand years.

Whether the British public is quite prepared to resume this most primitive mode of celebrating baptism, is a question which probably the moral writers upon "Church principles" have not yet ventured to decide upon. Such, however, was the invariable custom practised universally by the Christian Church. In the second stage of Christianity baptism was never administered in *private*, save to those who were dying. "The Church" appointed certain seasons, at which time all candidates attended; they were generally more than fourteen years of age. At first Easter and Whitsuntide were the specified festivals, to which was added Epiphany. The place of baptism was the baptistery, which was either separate from or a part of the church; each diocese had one, seldom more; that at Antioch held three thousand persons. This sacrament was always given at *night*, the place lighted up for the occasion, which circumstances do not add much to the delicacy of the scene. As the sponsors, for the sake of decency, were directed to be of the same sex as the catechumen, it is *probable* the men came at one hour, the women at another; but still the officiating bishops, priests and deacons were men; so that, although there was a sort of straining at a

gnat for the benefit of the laity, the camel was swallowed without difficulty by the clergy. Whatever holy influences might be expected, it was surely not thought the grace of modesty would be vouchsafed at such a time.

It must not be imagined that an ancient baptism was over in a moment. Before the immersion each person was anointed *all over* with oil (after the manner of the wrestlers in the Pythian or Olympic games); afterwards the ears were touched, and the word "Ephphatha" was pronounced; then followed exorcism, to cast out devils or evil spirits; then again anointing with oil (perhaps as confirmation); the Lord's supper was also received, tapers lighted, salt, honey and milk given, presents offered, decoration with garlands, &c. &c. &c. ! How much of this long performance was gone through whilst the regenerated individual stood undressed, is not distinctly stated; it might be only during the time the first anointing and the immersion took place.

This brief description may serve to show what *must* be the precise ceremony of baptism, if this most ancient (but *not* apostolical) practice be enforced.

Many of these observances began about the third century, and most of them are still continued

in the Church of Rome, but divested of their primitive improprieties.

Naked baptism was in use until adult baptism was given up, and displaced by infant baptism. If the absence of all clothing rendered the sacred rite more beneficial to grown-up people, surely it must have the same happy effect upon young children.

In the days of the Saviour and his Apostles, *water only* was used ; the ceremony was not confined to any time or place ; it was given by night in the prison, in the desert by day ; sometimes in a house, anon by the river-side ; no oil, no salt, no honey. But it seems men must always be devising some scheme to complete God's institutions ; as if the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth were not capable of imparting his own ordinances in perfection, without their capricious additions. Thus the simple form and manner of baptism, as expressly laid down by Christ and his inspired followers, is not supremely excellent without the strange appendages of exorcism and anointings, nor the blessing rendered efficacious without a breach of the first law of nature.

If the Fathers were infallible, and their sayings and doings, with their opinions and doctrines, are necessary for the perfecting of the Church of England, why not at once adopt this order of

things, and have baptism administered according to Nicene usage, and show that the story of Diana and her nymphs is scarcely a fable?

But if actions so highly indecorous were done and approved by those who had the care and guidance of the Christian church, ("which should not even be named amongst saints,") it is not uncharitable to conclude they were neither "wiser nor better than we," and that their writings should be regarded with extreme suspicion and caution.

The *spirit* of the Scriptures must have been ill understood by those who either introduced or permitted such gross impropriety (for "want of decency is want of sense").

St. Paul directs the "elder women to be treated as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity." Women were forbidden to enter the church "with their heads uncovered;" everything was "to be done decently and in order;" the women "to adorn themselves in *modest apparel* with *shamefacedness*." The Gospel does not allow even the "*appearance* of evil," much less then would the Apostles have witnessed or taught such intolerable things.

Let all honour and respect be given to the Fathers which may be their due; but they have no prerogative whereby they are to supersede

the Apostles. These are always more distinct and certain in their modes of expression, even were their Epistles without inspiration ; but the holy *influence*, which moved them to write, was certainly capable of expressing in a higher degree all that was requisite should be known on particular doctrines, than persons who have no such claim to attention. The Fathers were both ecclesiastical historians and theological writers, and as such are valuable for the evidence they afford on particular circumstances, or as showing the opinions held by various parties in the Christian Church in those early days. All correct doctrines were necessarily taken from Scripture, where they are still found exactly as they were received from God. The most important service rendered to posterity by the Fathers, was preserving the canonical books of Revelation ; in which they share with their corrupt descendants, the Church of Rome, which even in the dark ages did not destroy the Word of God. Yet after allowing them sincere thanks for this good deed, it is somewhat difficult to define what extraordinary meed of praise should be rendered to these persons for taking care of that which they could not *possibly have done without*. If there had been neither Law nor Gospel to produce in support of their doctrines, from whence came they ?

And who was Christ, and what was Christianity, if there was no testimony to adduce beyond vague tradition? Their religion was exhibited in the Bible, and in that was the source of every true doctrine which they promulgated. No one thinks of canonizing the Chancellors of England for having first received, and then transmitted to their successors, the statutes which it was their duty to act upon or enforce; nor are columns erected to their memories, because, when in office, they forbore obliterating or utterly cancelling the laws which were entrusted to them either to execute or obey. Shall men therefore in a more sacred vocation be unduly estimated, for no better reason than they kept entire the records of that kingdom whose guardians they professed to be? "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things commanded him? I trow not."

If the men in the early ages of the Christian æra were so wise and good, in what is that superiority manifested? Tertullian and Ambrose, Athanasius and Augustine were gifted with great powers of intellect, nevertheless they were "blinded by strong delusions to believe lies;" *if* it be kindly granted that they did not themselves *make* the falsehoods they propagated. It may therefore be concluded that their minds were not entirely clear, their judgments not always sound and

correct, their opinions not always free from imperfection. But St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John, were inspired to write truth without any mixture of error, so that whatever is on record from their pens may be depended upon as absolutely right. In the Gospels and Epistles one page of good doctrine is not followed by twenty filled with crude novelties or preposterous imaginations. "Men who spoke (and wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," did not teach that a morsel of sacramental bread worn as an amulet, would prevent all evil to the fortunate possessor; nor that relics and dead men's bones had such inherent virtues as to preserve a besieged city from the assaults of an army. Promises of such things might befit the Koran, but were not very likely to have been dictated by the Spirit of Truth.

But leaving the Apostles, it may be affirmed with safety, that the human mind has not degenerated in modern times. The writers who talk of the Fathers having a greater share of wisdom "than we," do not deserve to be the countrymen of Shakspeare, Milton, Bacon, Newton and Locke.

Nor can they vaunt of the superior piety possessed by the ancients. A few British reformers held more correct scriptural views of truth and

practice than did a hundred of the red-letter-day saints in a Popish almanac. English divines of the "Ultra-Protestant*" Reformed Church have written as learnedly, religiously and devotionally as any Nicene or Ante-Nicene Father, and are much more orthodox and apostolical on almost every fundamental doctrine of Christianity: neither in arts, arms, nor science is this age behind the first centuries; nor in benevolence and philanthropy of the highest kind. The infallible Churches of Nice and Rome never produced a Howard, a Clarkson, or a Wilberforce.

The Primitive Fathers were nearer to the apostolical times than ourselves, as they were nearer than ourselves to the times of physical creation; but did they therefore more fully comprehend than we the moral and physical principles of this world? Neither the word *discovery* nor the word *improvement* is without its meaning, nor is more applicable to physical than to moral subjects. It is a fashion with certain writers to speak with contempt of physical discoveries, and to deny moral discoveries altogether; to look with cold suspicion upon the physical advances of their species, and to refer us for political œconomy to the Bible; and as the Scriptures were all open to those primitive times, with a body of traditional

* Note 12.

learning which is lost to us, they would have us infer that the Fathers, having all that we have and much beside, were in a sounder state for the decision of all questions. We are content to test this opinion on the question of the baptismal rites of the Fathers, the Romanists, and the Protestants, leaving the arguments suggested by the names of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, Howard, Clarkson, and Allen, as foreign to our immediate object. Indeed the practice of the Puseyites is better than their theory, and altogether in favour of our argument; for they have *improved* upon the practices of Ignatius and Athanasius, and are, however inconsistently, *protesters* and *dissenters* from their errors in the matter of baptism.

It is very possible to hold *abstractedly* the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and yet crush and *hide* them under a mass of false additions. The *unity* of God may be professed by a Church which worships its "Gods many and Lords many." Those who deify the Virgin and *adore* the Cross, cannot be expected to have distinct perceptions of *the meaning of the first and second commandments*, nor of the *whole* tenor of Jewish history, which strives to inculcate throughout, that the anger of the Lord was always felt by that nation whenever they worshipped or *bowed*

down before a graven image. *The atonement of Christ* cannot be a "finished" work to those who are perpetually offering the sacrifice of his "real body and blood;" and when the Eucharist can cleanse from sin and is necessary to salvation, the "one great oblation and satisfaction" becomes a useless doctrine of Scripture. *The mediation of Christ* cannot be a definite article of faith to those who ask for the intercession of saints. *The influences of the Holy Spirit* can be of small importance, when the gift of regeneration is obtained by the act of baptism, and when that rite can put a new nature into a guilty creature, and "make him pure as the seraphim which worship before the Lord." *The corruption of original sin* must be a matter of no consequence if *water* only be near. When the *forgiveness of sins* can be withheld or vouchsafed by a priest, or purchased with money, the wrath of God need not be feared. *The communion of saints* becomes a trifling privilege when it is to be confined to the members of the Romish or Puseyite Catholic Church*; and when the happiness or misery of the life everlasting is to depend upon the prayers of hired priests or the noise of a bell, what signifies *the day of judgment*?

When such extreme differences exist between

* See 18th Article.

scriptural principles and “Church principles,” it is no wonder they “diverge from each other;” and the whole argument may resolve itself into this—either that the Bible does not mean what it says, or that divines of Nice, Rome and Oxford, know what the Christian religion should be better than the Lord God Almighty.

It is not true what some affirm, that because certain men lived only two or three, or five or six hundred years after the Christian æra, they were necessarily “wiser and better” than those who were born ten or twelve centuries later. Do the writings of the Fathers show such to have been the case?

They overlaid and falsified much of the Word of God, and they invented and taught modes of acting and thinking at variance with Scripture; and the result was, that the *dissolute* and scandalous state of society which prevailed in the Christian world, *under the sanction* of the Church, was such as could not be described here with propriety, even were it not irrelevant to this subject. It is not by returning to the ancient modes of action, but by studying more carefully the Gospels and Epistles, that any improvement can be made in discipline or practice. These are perfect rules;—not so Fathers and Councils, with their false opinions and erroneous theories.

If it were still a matter of doubt, what must

be the result of commemorating saints, worshipping images, bowing to crosses, and "keeping proper reserve in communicating religious knowledge," there might be a shadow of a reason for making the experiment against the express commands of God. This has been done once;—"Church principles" have been in action more or less since the second century, and therefore have had time and space for exhibition. Christendom has had the tragedy performed for ages, with all the pomp and circumstance which the glory and power of the world could afford. And who have been the great actors in the drama?—some of the most wicked and depraved men that have ever lived. *Never* was there a *line* of kings so entirely given up to sin and vice as the men who dared to call themselves God's vicegerents,—the Popes of Rome. In them is seen the concentrated essence of "Church principles." And let those principles be again the standard of faith and practice *instead* of the Bible, and again will Europe have the hierarchy trampling under foot the rights and privileges of the laity, both in temporals and spirituals; and the "secular arm," compelled by their appalling mandates, will be assisting the decrees of a party which never knew what pity meant. But if the people do not intend to make use of their own senses, and are

willing to take for Gospel the fancies, vagaries, and discipline of the Fathers, (as they are now being gently doled out to them in every possible way in tract, and song and story,) they will find, when it is too late, the snare they have fallen into ; for weak flies may as well hope to escape out of the strong web of the crafty spider, as the unfortunate nation which has surrendered the right of private judgment and "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free," can elude the force of "Church principles," when the grasp has been once allowed.

The seat of Popery in Italy may be considered a fair specimen of the working out of "Church principles" into reality. The buds appeared in the Primitive Church, the bloom unfolded in the Nicene, the fruit ripened in the Romish. And what are the Italians ? The superior and educated classes (doubtless with many great exceptions) are Christians by courtesy, Catholics by name,—infidels in belief, and atheists in practice and conduct ; the lower orders in the most degraded state of ignorance, superstition, and demoralization ; and this in a country which has been graced and favoured since the year 532* with an *infallible* head of the Church to guide them into all that is true and good.

* Or 445 or 606.

If these people “ had been baptized into Christ, they would have put on Christ ;” but it could not be expected they should understand what spiritual religion meant, when *their* “ Lord God the Pope ” did not always himself credit Christianity. Boniface VIII. said he “ believed no more in Mary than an ass, nor in her *Son* than the foal of an ass*.” According to “ *Church principles*,” this man had received the Holy Ghost four different times ;—at baptism, confirmation, ordination, and consecration to the pontifical chair ; yet notwithstanding these advantages, he did not acknowledge the first doctrines of Christian truth. The daily mockery he went through of bowing down to and worshipping the image of Christ, became a more idolatrous profanity in this hypocritical scoffer, than the blind and ignorant devotion of a pagan to his false gods.

Those who “ hate the Reformation more and more every day,” might find it an improving study to see if there could be any resemblance discerned between those who had really been “ justified and renewed in their natures ” by the influences of the Holy Spirit, (as manifested in the holy and blameless lives of St. John and St. Paul,) or those *merely baptismally* regenerated in-

* See Bruy. iii. 346 ; Du Pay, 529 ; Alex. 22, 319, 327.

fidels and monsters,—Boniface, John XXII., and Julius. But had *any* of the sacred services they received been capable of imparting spiritual gifts, then these men could not have always been so exceedingly corrupt. Each of the ceremonies was good in itself, and necessary to be observed for particular purposes, but had certainly done so little for the recipients as to amount to nothing. The operations of the Holy Ghost are never in vain, nor would it be possible that the Spirit could have descended, time after time, upon the souls of these men, and yet not leave one enlightening, purifying ray of holiness or truth.

By the statements of the Tract-school, “baptism creates faith,”—“it is the primary instrument in creating faith,”—“the regeneration given in baptism is never wholly lost in this life,”—“from the time of its reception the receiver of it becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost,”—“he has the evil spirit taken out of him, and becomes like unto the seraphim and archangel*.” If all these blessings *invariably* ensue from baptism, it must be concluded, that Boniface, John and Julius were never baptized, nor had had the “compensating ceremony” of confirmation; yet they were supreme heads of that visible church, which spiritually they had not even entered. If they

* See Hook, Pusey, Newman.

had been "faithful men," "temples of the Holy Ghost," and "pure as the seraphim," they could not have exhibited in their lives more vices than ordinarily fall to the lot of mortals; but if they were indeed baptized, then the Tract-men are completely at fault.

Idolatry may differ in form or manner, and one kind may be apparently less hurtful than another, but in the eyes of God all idolatry is obnoxious to his *wrath* and displeasure. Whether it be the molten calf in the wilderness—the weeping for the ideal Thammuz—the great Diana of the Ephesians—the wooden virgin at Loretto—or the *small crucifix at Oxford*—the sin is the same as that of bowing down to the golden image in the plain of Dura. And although "Church principles" have sanctioned and allowed, for hundreds of years, statues and representations of the Virgin and all saints to be objects of adoration and veneration, it is not the less sinful in men called Christians than it was in the Jewish nation planting high places and sacrificing to Baal. What began in merely innocent respect and remembrance for deceased saints or martyrs, has in process of time ended in idolatry. The second commandment is most explicit upon the subject—"Thou shalt not *bow* down to the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth;" be it an image, a pic-

ture, a cross, which receives the slightest religious homage, the action is gross sin, "for the Lord is a jealous God." The "irrefragably true" Council which allowed and established the breaking of the commandment, and whose descendants removed it altogether from the Decalogue, may have been exceedingly tenacious of their "Church principles," but had certainly very little regard for those given by God in the Old Testament, or enforced by Christ in the New. There has been no abrogation of either the law or the Gospel; each, as they were closed, must remain to the end of time, the only unalterable infallible standard of truth. And that Church which sets up her opinions and decrees against the express declarations of revelation, must abide the consequences of her sin before Him who will not tolerate the reverential abstractions of the learned *bowing* before the finely painted picture or the carved cross, any more than he will forgive the vulgar worship of the ignorant to the image of wood or stone.

That there is in Puseyism a tendency towards Romanism, facts as well as opinions have made but too plain. In the English Protestant Church, and in the year 1841, it might have been expected that the glorious text—"God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in

spirit and in truth," should be understood and appreciated. It is not. Let us return then to the milk for babes, and remind these primitive (may we not say *young*?) Christians, that St. Paul censures that "voluntary humility" (that humiliation of the intellect—that prostration of the spirit) which consists in "the worship of angels." (Coloss. ii. 18.) If this also is too deep a doctrine, or too simple a truth, to find acceptance with those who are as prodigal of their own Christian liberty as they are greedy of spiritual slavery for others, we must resort to the denunciations of the law in words too plain to be misunderstood—"Thou shalt not make to thyself *any* graven image—thou shalt *not* bow down to them, *nor* worship them—for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

The followers of Dr. Pusey are spoken of as men of learning as well as piety. In what page of sound philosophy (for they will not pretend that *all* philosophy is vain) have they read that idolatry is not the deepest debasement of man's reason, the most fearful corrupter of man's heart? In what page of true history (for they will not pretend that all history is a cunningly-devised fable) have they read that idolatry is not a most insidious poison, lurking under *robes* of scarlet, black or white—in *forms* numerous, few

or simple, but above all in *holy objects* and *sacred places*? “We are convinced that the Roman empire gained much when the statue of Jupiter was named St. Peter, and when Mary, ever virgin, a good and gracious lady, displaced the mysteries of the Bona Dea;” and are satisfied that holy water is purer than the blood of victims. But we protest against the statue of St. Peter, the worship of the Virgin, and the drenching with holy water, as neither scriptural nor reasonable, the consequences of which being as plain as facts can make them. And we insist that a return to these things (be they ever so much approved by Popes, Fathers and Councils) is a step towards idolatry, and a departure from the text—“God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION,
AND
THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

“ Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.”

1 Thessal. v. 21.

THE foundation upon which “ Church principles ” arose, and are to be so strongly re-assumed, is “ **APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION,** ” from which divine prerogative there is to be no appeal, and therefore no right of private judgment. “ The yoke which our fathers would not bear ” is about to be placed upon the necks of their descendants, and that for the most extraordinary reasons ; not that they are really more ignorant, profane, superstitious or demoralized than the Popish kingdoms of Italy or Spain, but that, on the presumption that the Reformed Church has wandered too far from the paths of “ Church principles ” (whose

highways are in a direct line to and from the "eternal city"), it is considered desirable to force every one back again into the ancient track.

It may not be quite useless to look for a moment into the only circumstance on which the claims of the Church are rested.

The phrase "*Apostolical Succession*,"—the charm in which all power on earth and heaven is comprised—rests on the promises of "binding and loosing," "retaining and remitting." *The promise of retaining and remitting* was made after the Resurrection, when Christ appeared to "the disciples (were there more present than the Apostles?), who were met together on the first day of the week." On that occasion Thomas was absent, therefore had not the gift (which was never repeated); Matthias was not chosen, and St. Paul was then a persecutor. Ten of the Apostles therefore received powers which were *never* bestowed upon the other three. Yet St. Paul writes that he was quite equal in authority to any of them, and "not a whit behind the very chiefest of them." (2 Cor. xi. 5.) If so, what superiority had these apparently mighty, but certainly doubtful and mysterious promises afforded? Not one of the ten who had been thus exalted above their fellows ever did forgive sins, or professed they could do so. What then was remitting and re-

taining? Apparently no higher authority than every prudent Christian in this day has, who can assure those who have repentance and faith that God will pardon them for the sake of Christ ; but that if they have neither, there is no salvation for them. St. Paul *never* had the power of retaining and remitting given to him ; therefore whatever efficacy results from orders must descend from one of the ten ; not from him, Matthias, or Thomas. Yet although he declares his equality in all things with his brethren, " Church principles " pronounce his inferiority, for of course he could not transmit a privilege to others which was never vouchsafed to himself.

St. Peter had *the reward* of "*binding and loosing*" given before the Crucifixion. It was strange if the Apostle enjoyed two godlike attributes, and yet was unconscious of possessing that which rendered him supreme and infallible ! The other Apostles did not seem aware of his elevation above them, when they were all " striving who should be greatest ! " He exercised his supremacy with singular moderation, not only to conceal it from those he was always with, but in writing with such condescension " to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Cappadocia," &c. (1 Ep.) " Dearly beloved, I beseech you,"—" Be pitiful, be courteous,"—" *Above all things*, have fervent

charity amongst yourselves." Had he known that he was the "Lord our God's heritage," he might probably have adopted the style of those who call themselves his successors, which has ever been remarkably *unlike* his.

St. Peter's infallibility is even more questionable than his supremacy. The power of "binding and loosing" (whatever it might be) was given before the Lord's supper, and if it had included this quality, that would have been a good opportunity for its manifestation. Yet, with one exception, he was the weakest and most culpable of all the Apostles. Even after the reception of the Sacrament, he strove like the rest for the pre-eminence: Christ knew his tendency to sin, and therefore prayed for him; he was allowed to witness the agony in the garden, but instead of watching and praying (as desired), he slept; and immediately afterwards he denied his master! That he repented bitterly and was forgiven, no one doubts; but the man who could be guilty of these acts was obviously anything but infallible. He subsequently partook of the gift (be it what it may) of "remitting and retaining;" yet (Gal. ii. 11.) we find some years after St. Peter was "withstood, for he was to be *blamed*." It is clear from this evidence against him that he was not infallible. How then could he transmit a

possession he never enjoyed? He himself could not have done wrong if he had been thus privileged ; and when he is censured for not “ walking uprightly,” it is obvious that he cannot be pronounced to have been free from error or mistake.

That there has ever been, since the days of Christ, a regularly ordained ministry, none will deny ; but the power claimed by what is called “ Apostolical Succession ” is not so easily substantiated. The dubious meaning of the promise to St. Peter was not afterwards defined, and if the above paragraph be duly attended to, it must be allowed that there never was *any* appearance of supremacy or infallibility exhibited. The expression of Christ, whatever was its limitation to St. Peter, does not contain any legacy to a certain class of persons to invest themselves with supreme ecclesiastical dignity, nor did St. Peter ever assume any right of leaving to them such a bequest in consequence thereof. The other Apostles did not share in this promise to him, and only some of them in that of “ retaining and remitting.” The Churches then must entirely depend for the *efficacy* of their orders upon the direct line from him, for none of the rest had the gift in the same degree, and three of them had not the slightest pretension to share in it, and therefore has the Western Church ever supposed her orders to arise

from St. Peter having been the *first Bishop of Rome*. Although St. Paul mentions his intended journey into Spain, the Church in that country never considers his residence there as leaving any succession, but always looks to St. Peter. Yet is there no certainty that he ever was at Rome. All probabilities are against it. The records which profess to give a statement of the fact are filled with the most absurd miracles, as evidence of the truth of the affirmation; and there is no testimony but that which is commingled with the most contemptible fables; and all this body of evidence must be taken or left together, however derogatory many portions of it may be to the Apostle's sacred character.

St. Paul certainly was at Rome. But although St. Peter's biographers say he was there two years, and suffered martyrdom with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, there seems to be no foundation for the story. Evidently he was *not* there when St. Paul wrote to the Colossians, for five persons are named in the Epistle, of whom he says, "*These alone, my fellow-workers, have been a comfort to me.*" When the Apostle was called before Nero, it was not very likely St. Peter was amongst the number of those who "forsook" him. It may therefore be concluded that he was not then in the city. Nor was he there when St. Paul's de-

parture was nigh at hand ; for when he refers, in his Epistle to Timothy, to his departure, and sends the salutations of four persons to him, he never mentions St. Peter. When six of the Epistles were written from Rome, many of them ending with the courteous remembrances of the Christians there, St. Peter's name is not once given, nor is he alluded to in any way. If he were there, why is not his name mentioned in the opening of the Epistle to the Thessalonians : "Paul and Sylvanus and Timotheus unto the Church," &c. ? These two disciples were very inferior in degree to St. Peter, yet were they conjoined (being present) with him in his address. St. Paul was the great Apostle to the Gentiles ; St. Peter was expressly sent "to them of the circumcision ;" their vocations and appointments were quite distinct and explicit. It is next to impossible that when the Spirit had "wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision," that he should have become the head of the Gentile Church, to the abasement of St. Paul*, and this without one syllable in holy writ to verify it and explain the charge. Again, what were the two Apostles doing together at Rome ? their services apparently could not be both wanted there. St. Paul was a prisoner, but yet whilst living "in his

* See Acts ix. 15 ; Gal. ii. 8.

own hired house" could exercise any jurisdiction required by the Christian Church ; and, from the case of Onesimus, it is plainly seen that he was engaged in diffusing the knowledge of Christianity. Whenever St. Paul travelled to found new Churches, he mentioned who it was that accompanied him—sometimes Barnabas, sometimes Apollos ; never Peter. Also St. Paul was *equal*, if not superior to St. Peter. If, therefore, St. Peter were Bishop of Rome, he first of all condescended to accept a subordinate office, and then placed St. Paul *under* his spiritual power and authority.

If the Bishop of Rome were supreme head of the Church in right of St. Peter, how came that supremacy to be unknown and unheard of during the first four centuries of the Christian æra ? If that length of time elapsed ere the discovery was made, by what new light was it revealed ?

The Church, whose all depends upon the direct succession, has had some difficulty in making out who followed in the problematical chair of St. Peter, for the next Bishops, Linus and Cletus, are sometimes said to be *two* persons, then made into *three* ! [This occurrence raises a suspicion as to the veracity of old chronicles.] So that Clement, who should be fourth, is placed fifth. The *unerring* Church of Rome long kept two distinct

festivals in honour of Cletus and Antecletus, believing them to be separate individuals, whereas at last they proved but one, and so Clement was named fourth Bishop. How a chain can be continued which has no first link, and when the next three links are but two, is very mysterious ! The mechanics of this scientific country never pretend to anything half so clever as to add to a thing which no one can prove ever began. *Their* works of suspension have always an actual visible commencement, and if a link be wanting, they cannot hide that the chain is broken.

Not so with *Apostolical Succession*: St. Peter and the two following bishops are somewhat *ideal* holders of the see of Rome, yet by an accommodating imagination, the unmathematical proposition, the unmechanical contrivance, is carried on. Begin with Clement, and the dispute is settled, for there is a direct line from him, yet through most devious courses ; but this unhappily will not answer the purpose, for Clement was not an Apostle.

St. Paul certainly was at Rome ; but the last accounts he gives of the Church of the whole world were not sufficiently flattering to induce the Nicene Fathers to set him up as the source from whence these unbounded resources for Church principles were to flow.

But if it could be authenticated that St. Peter was first Bishop of Rome, it does not appear that they who followed him in the *office* did so in *doctrine*. Many of them were Arians, and one of them (St. Monullinus, 296) is said to have sacrificed to idols! An idolater holding the keys!—the professed deniers of the Godhead of Christ apostolical! The last *unerring* Council of Nice sat almost 200 years after the establishment of the *Popedom*, and was so scriptural in its doctrines as to permit image-worship. If therefore the Tract-school is to be bound by the decrees of the six “irreformable” Councils, *idolatry* is part and parcel of “Church principles,” and it may refer to the practice of St. Monullinus as decisive of the question. Whether therefore the Church principles being now brought into fashion, are meant to come from these authorities, or are to branch off somewhere before the Papacy set in, is not very material.

St. Peter's supremacy, infallibility and bishopric must all be proved, ere they can be allowed to fetter the minds of this generation. There is no *positive* evidence of the slightest value that the Apostle ever possessed any of these things; but there is abundance of negative testimony, too strong to be gainsaid, against the whole story, and all this testimony must first be set aside, ere

the opposite supposition can be rendered even probable ; and as all these bold assumptions have still to be demonstrated, before the *infallibility* of the Church of Rome, or the Apostolical *succession* of Puseyite Church principles can have the fulcrum upon which they propose to move the world, it becomes desirable to know on what ground the "right of private judgment" is to be exclusively given to the Fathers, and why *their* opinions must bind the Christian Church in every age, when, from the variations which are always occurring in their writings, they evidently were no more inspired than people are now. Tradition being human is of course imperfect. The Fathers who lived at the same time did not coincide in their interpretation of Scripture with each other ; those who lived in one age saw in a different light the views of those in the past ; and men who flourished in the East, disagreed materially from those in the West. Thus a perpetual change in explanation and discipline was always going on in "Church principles."

Then came the Popes, who, with all their infallibility, were just as unsettled as their ancient examples, and what one said another denied. Perhaps the only point in a hundred decrees in which they all united, was in the adoption of that concluding phrase, which was invariably a *curse* ;

so that a man was this day anathematized if he did not believe what tomorrow he would be obliged to forswear under similar penalties. Although it admits of proof clear as the light of the sun, that all these persons, whether Fathers or Councils, were always acknowledging themselves by their changes to be in error, they are nevertheless to be deemed standards of perfection, from whence there is no appeal. The divine Saviour always referred to "the law and the testimony," *never* to the traditions of men; and "Moses and the Prophets" were *then* what the Gospel is *now*; yet this age of the world, which has "the sure word" to examine on every occasion, and all the experience which arises from the faults, mistakes, and follies of anterior time, is to be bound in slavish submission to minds *nowise* superior to those which it pleases God to give at this period! But even supposing that the men of the Nicene or other Councils had the privilege of dictating to others for ever, it becomes even then a matter of debate to decide who, or which of them, is to be the leader of everlasting opinion, seeing that amongst them are glaring inconsistencies and disagreements in doctrine and practice, and frequent squabbling!

Mr. Palmer says*, "The doctrine of the

* Palmer's Treatise, p. 188.

first six Councils* having been approved and acted on by the whole body of the Catholic Church, and thus ratified by a universal consent, which has been acted on ever since, is irrefragably true, unalterable, and irreformable, nor could any Church forsake or change the doctrine without ceasing to be Christian." It is very easy to write things which are very difficult to prove; but the 19th century expects and insists upon assertions being proved.

Where did the *six Councils* obtain this divine authority? Had they consisted of the Apostles only, men inspired by the Holy Ghost, who, from being under the immediate guidance of God's Spirit, could not err on such an occasion, it should have been the duty of the Christian Church to have received the whole of their opinions without gainsaying; but as these assemblies were entirely composed of persons with no rule of action nor thought, but what is open to every other individual, there was no more power given to them than if they were so many men seated in Dr. Pusey's study.

The first of *these* six Councils was A.D. 325, which met to oppose the Arian heresy; yet so little authority had this very Council upon the

* Note 13.

times in which it occurred, that in the same century two of the Bishops of Rome (infallible by virtue of their office) were Arians ! The last of these extraordinarily gifted Councils was in 682, and consequently within the Papacy. Then had commenced the Conclaves for the election of the Popes, which are pompously announced as sitting and acting under the especial inspiration of the Holy Ghost ; yet few are so ignorant as not to know, that Italian craft, Spanish dollars, and German or French diplomacy, have usually been the *influences* by which the Pontiffs have been chosen.

Perhaps the old Councils were not under such close surveillance ; yet as each of them was convened by an Emperor, it is possible the dignitaries of those ages might not be less amenable to courtly smiles and worldly motives than their successors.

Seeing therefore that these ancient Councils were merely convocations of clergy, invited or commanded to meet by a sovereign, they turn out to be nothing more than assemblages of men, left to their own judgments, feelings and interests, just as they are at this moment, with no other rule of faith but the Bible, and no other influence than what is granted daily to the prayer of the humblest Christian.

Now as these affirmations cannot be refuted, it has to be settled on what principle no one is to be permitted to dissent from antiquity, or how that universal gift of God, **THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT**, is to be set aside. The Puseyites take the liberty they possess, of thinking as they choose, not as is chosen for them, and as freemen they can do so; but from whence have they any privilege of thought which is not granted to their fellow-creatures? Probably they may reply, "From our episcopal ordination." But were they ordained (as many Popish priests are, or were,) at six or eight years old, so that their sacred office was given before they knew one doctrine from another? They were not. They must have attained mature age ere they entered into the body of the clergy, and till that time were laymen, and enjoyed the right of private judgment as they do now; or how were they then capable of deciding which of the Fathers was right or wrong? It could only be by this gift, the right of private judgment, which is bestowed like the rain, upon the just and the unjust. They could then have no claim, authority nor privilege of mind, more than the meanest or most obscure individual to whom the Almighty has vouchsafed sense and reason. Before they had reached their twenty-fourth year and received

orders, they had the power to choose whether they would enter the reformed Church of England or the unreformed Church of Rome, or belong to any class of sectarians; and they may still change their mind, for it is not quite an unusual sight to behold men turning Papists or Puseyites, or Irvingites.

But if men have the power to become heretics and idolaters, and embrace false opinions, they surely have the same power of choice in refusing to accept the commandments and traditions of the Pharisees of any name or nation. *Suppose* the Bishop of Oxford not to accord on many points with the six Councils, what intellectual, moral, or scriptural law is there to forbid the exercise of his reason upon them, and why may not he decide upon what he deems sound or unsound, scriptural or unscriptural, without being in consequence denounced "as ceasing to be a Christian?" If Dr. Pusey and Mr. Palmer have the right to determine for themselves, how may they deny to their Diocesan a similar right to that which they, his inferior clergy, assume? They act upon their *private judgment* in agreeing with the Councils; the prelate surely has the freedom to dissent upon the same ground, if he think proper.

We trust that the honest boldness of English-

men will ever *claim this right for themselves*, and that their hearty fairness will ever be ready to *allow it to others*.

As the laity possess every faculty of mind and body in an equal degree with the clergy—as they share in every gift of God, spiritual and temporal—as promises of salvation are for the one class as much as for the other—as Christ died for all, so each and every one of God’s creatures, to whom reason is imparted, when arrived at years of discretion and become an accountable being, has a share in his divine endowment—the right of private judgment.

There is not a passage, not a sentence of God’s law, which chains and ties the mind of men to the dictates of their fellows in spiritual matters. The “powers that be” are ordained for the well-being of society in matters of conduct, not for the coercion of people whilst exercising their reason in the discovery of truth. St. Paul says, “by the terrors of the Lord we *persuade* men;” no threats of a “secular arm,” with its fires and racks. If the world cannot be convinced of righteousness, they must be left with God to abide the consequences. The Epistles are all addressed to the reason and sense of the Christians to whom he wrote. Occasionally there are most explicit commands; but generally the style

is strictly argumentative, and each point is logically carried out from its premises to its conclusion. If men had not been permitted the use of their judgments, the whole of God's word would have been in distinct mandates, and ten other short commandments might have concluded and summed up all human duty.

How exactly opposite to this is the whole plan of the New Testament ! The Apostle strenuously endeavours to *convince* men of the "excellent way:" he *reasons*, he *expostulates*, but he never dictates a blind and irrational obedience. Are not these things written for our instruction ? And do they teach any man, or order of men, to require passive obedience, with the entire prostration of the intellect, from God's rational and accountable creatures ? We trow not. In the writings of the Apostles, the Almighty has been graciously pleased to explain such doctrines as were within the comprehension of finite minds, and condescended to argue upon them ; from this it becomes plain that such was to be the only mode adopted by his inferior creatures towards each other ; no *force* was enjoined. Remonstrance and persuasion were to be used, and then all was to be left free. " I beseech you " is a most common address to the Churches. " Come unto me " are Christ's own words, which, if there had

been no freedom of action or liberty of private judgment, would not have been an invitation to listen, but a positive injunction.

When Adam and Eve were placed in Eden, there was but one law given,—that of obedience : this they disobeyed ; but if there had been no liberty of thought, no power of decision, the fault could not have been committed ; nevertheless God did allow them unfettered right to act as they pleased. To each was the privilege given, for the woman first assumed it, and the man soon showed he participated in the right. The weaker as well as the stronger discovered the innate boon, and exercised it ; for as they might have refrained from the crime, so they had equal ability to perpetrate it.

The point now attempted to be substantiated is this, that they had the right of choice, which has never been altered nor diminished, and that it has descended from them to their latest posterity. When God was their *only* superior, He, in his unerring wisdom, permitted them to judge for themselves. It was a fatal, but not the less a divine trust. It was a trust without which man would not have been a responsible agent, and could no more have been a fit object of praise or censure, of reward or punishment, than the

irrational and inarticulate creatures with which he was surrounded; and that right of free thought, of private judgment, which the Creator then bestowed in an unlimited degree, none of his inferior dependent creatures can have the slightest authority to change or lessen.

If we are mistaken in this matter—if there be any scriptural authority to Fathers, or Councils, or Popes, or Puseyites, to think for us, and to prevent our thinking for ourselves, we desire to see that authority. As founded on Apostolical Succession, &c., it is, as we have shown, untenable. On the other hand, that the right of private judgment is inalienably in each, is an opinion as scriptural as it is reasonable.

The right of private judgment is not always exercised for ill. In the days of Christ how many “*chose* that good part which can never be taken away!” The early Christians embraced with joy the offers of the Gospel, which gave “liberty to the captive,” and endured to the end the persecutions of the Jewish Church, which, like the Romish and the Puseyite, would not grant freedom of opinion but to themselves.

If a high-church party is always right, the followers of Baal were the true worshippers, for they were supported by the king and all the priests;

therefore Elijah, the stern prophet of the Most High God, was to them as an empty babbler, a Luther, who proved their false assumptions.

In Jerusalem, at a certain important epoch, the high priest rent his clothes, and was very zealous for the law and the traditions of men, and sent out a band, who went and found in Gethsemane "Him whom they sought:" "they did all that was in their hearts;" and the result was, their temple was rased to its foundations, and their nation has been ever since a hissing and reproach amongst mankind. So much for repressing the teaching of God's pure word and ordinances, and insisting upon a unison of opinion, without granting free discussion as to whether it be truth or error; for although Christ fulfilled all righteousness, that was not enough for "the Church," which, when informed that "his kingdom was not of this world," preferred a robber and a murderer before Him "who spake as never man spake." The high priest and Pharisees never went to learn for themselves; they had adopted one line of proceeding, founded on the "commandments and traditions of men;" there was no scriptural truth, no private judgment allowed. The result is too well known to be named. "These things are written for our ensamples," and prove that "Church principles" are sure to be

carried with a high hand when they can obtain the power which they claim ; but it is not always that “ those who sit in Moses’ seat ” understand best what the principles of Christ really are. Any who are curious to know what Christ’s expressed opinion of the high-church party of his day was, may refer to the 23rd chapter of Matthew.

It matters not how ancient doctrines or discipline may be, if they are contrary to the spirit of the Scriptures. Christianity is “ built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone ;” but the passage does not run on to say, “ and upon the *Fathers and Councils*.” This is an addition of much later date than the apostolic age. “ Did any of the ” Fathers “ die for you,” or “ were ye baptized in the name of the ” Fathers ? that their precepts and practices are to be preferred to those of “ the Lord who bought them with his own most precious blood ?” Irenæus and Ignatius, &c. &c. may have been very holy men, but their works were never considered canonical by any Church, and never arrived at the apocryphal distinction to which Tobit and Judith attained ; and if in many things they are valuable authorities, it does not follow from that circumstance that they were inspired by the Holy Ghost as the Apostles were.

The prelates of antiquity had no more inspiration granted to them than the modern bishops possess ; indeed, from the style in which many of them wrote on Scripture, and spiritualized away its meaning, it may be suspected they had less sense and worse taste than the divines of the reformed Churches. It is as idle to deny to later theologians improvements in practice, and, to all intents, discoveries of principles in theology, as it would be idle to deny that modern philosophers have made similar improvements and discoveries in science.

Without wishing to disparage any of the Fathers, who by their example and instructions benefited the world, it must be borne in mind they were but men, partaking the same human and sinful nature as the rest of their fellow-creatures, and therefore just as liable to error and mistake as others, which is constantly shown by the unscriptural tenets which even the best amongst them held. In the course of these few pages on the doctrine and rite of Baptism, we have had to mention many errors and disagreements of the Fathers. We have protested against “ the living water ” and the “ bread from heaven ” being converted into *superstitious ceremonies in the hands of a dominant priesthood*. We would that the laity themselves would look into these things,

and suffer neither the waters of baptism, nor the bread in the Lord's supper, nor absolution, to be made a means of laying them prostrate at the feet of the clergy. The more guarded the approach or the return of spiritual despotism, the more should we be on our guard against them. It is not of Romanism, but of the spirit of Romanism, that we are afraid. And as idolatry may steal upon us unawares in *the small crucifix at Oxford*, so may Priestdom in holy water, the consecrated wafer, and, above all, *in absolution*, if once we begin to receive "for doctrines the commandments of men."

Notwithstanding the many imperfections but too visible amongst those who were confessors or martyrs "for the faith once delivered to the saints," nothing would have been said of their faults had they been permitted by their admirers to remain what they are, ecclesiastical historians and biblical commentators; but when they are to be put in the place of the Apostles, and that all people "cease to be Christians" who decline receiving their absolute authority, it becomes a matter of duty to deny the claim made for them. But we deny that claim by argument. We never for a moment suppose that we have the right to employ anything but argument; and we never suppose for a moment that our opponents have not

the right to refuse their assent to our arguments. And we allow to the clergy the same right which we claim for the laity—the great right of private judgment. We appeal not to force, we eschew it altogether, but to proof.

When mankind are judged by their God from his own laws, given by the Holy Ghost, “the traditions and commandments” of mortals will not be allowed to appear; for however unintentionally wrong the Fathers were on many subjects, it is a matter too well known to admit of doubt, that the “Church principles” taken from their writings seated Antichrist on the papal throne. And we are yet to learn that the mischief of anti-christian dogmatism, whether in action or in reaction, is not far greater than the dangers which attend the right of private judgment. These dangers, be they what they may, are according to the law of our intellectual and moral being, and in accordance with the doctrines and the practice of the New Testament.

Since the Reformation, Christendom has become a scene of renewed energy and life. The world seems pressing on to some undefined goal; all things appear in haste, and events are crowded into a day which formerly would have sufficed to fill a decade. But this rapid progression does not

suit all minds and schemes. "The tree of the knowledge of good" must be cropped, each shoot nipped ere it unfolds into bloom, if the trunk may not be cut down, and the old "evil" must be risked, rather than permit "the branch," "whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," to attain such luxuriance as to bury in its shade the tottering ruins of Rome. Rome's decay is rendered rather less visible just now, from the unexpected growth of numerous parasites, which, encircling her crumbling pillars, appear to support and hide her sapped foundations. There seems indeed a second spring, but the "time, times, and a half time" are nearly accomplished.

Had the Christian principles of the New Testament been diffused for 1800 years, instead of the "*Church principles*" invented by *Fathers and Councils and Popes*, the world would not be still for the most part in darkness. "But the day-spring from on high hath visited us," and those who were once in "the shadow of death, have seen a great light." "The angel is in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel for all nations, tongues, kindreds and people." (Rev. xiv.) His successor shall be the ministering spirit, whose commission shall announce to the world that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen;" and it

will be as much in vain for a momentary *ignis fatuus* to supersede the orb of day, as it will be possible for the subtle mists of the silvery Isis, or the denser miasma of the muddy Tiber, to obscure the "Sun of righteousness which has arisen with healing on his wings."

In dim twilight or deep midnight a lamp is of use to dispel the gloom ; but none would deem a small artificial gleam of any value, except to persons groping in some dark cavern under ground, when God's sunshine was diffusing the brightest light to all on earth. The unwise imaginations of men were of importance when there was nothing else to illumine the understandings of mankind ; but now, when the whole volume of divine inspiration may be had by every one, it is certainly safer to walk in the broad blaze of truth which is thus shed abroad on all sides, than to seek out a path by the glimmerings which here and there emerge from the oppressive atmosphere of old council chambers, or the malaria which surrounds Rome.

When reason was bestowed upon man, it was given for his use, and with it God granted liberty of conscience ; otherwise it would be a cruel mockery that each should be required to give an account of himself. He who has not power of thought is not a responsible being, but he who

will not exercise his power of thought is responsible for its neglect, and also for the abuses, both negative and positive, which this neglect may cause. He who allows others to think for him, whether from habit, prejudice, idleness or education, awaits the great tribunal with him, who has to answer to his Judge for every perversion of scriptural truth, every worldly motive, every pious fraud, and every crafty sophism, which he may have employed to mislead the weak, the timid, the ignorant, the indifferent.

The two distinct rules of faith are once more on their trial: there is the Bible, the infallible word of the unchanging God on one side, and on the other the writings of the Fathers, and the opinions of the ancient and very corrupt Church: the former is *divine*, and *cannot err*; the latter *human*, therefore perpetually varying and contradictory.

“If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal be God, follow him.” (1 Kings, xviii. 21.)

“I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say.” (1 Cor. x. 15.)

NOTES.

NOTE 1.

"It is a certain and true doctrine of all such as profess the Gospel, that the *outward signs* of the sacrament do not contain grace; neither yet that the grace of God is tied to them; but only that they be seals of God's promises; notes of Christianity; testimonies and effectual *signs* of the grace of God, and of our redemption in Christ Jesus. And there is such a similitude between the *signs* and the thing signified, that they are in Scripture usually called by the names of those things whereof they be the sacraments; as bread the body of Christ, and water regeneration."—*Archbishop Whitgift's Defence*, p. 378.

NOTE 2.

"Puseyites," a sect which arose in the Church of England about seven years since; and which, leaving the Bible to others, trace their traditions to Dr. Pusey. [See Dr. Hook's lucid definitions of the words "Lutherans," "Wesleyans."]

NOTE 3.

If, in reading the following passage of Scripture, the word baptism be put instead of *circumcision*, the argument of this tract, that regeneration, that is salvation, is granted to believing faith independent of baptism, will be clearly proved and fully established:—

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was

reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the *sign* of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also; "And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had, yet being uncircumcised."—Romans iv. 8-12.

NOTE 4.

Dr. Pusey writes, that an infant, by the mere performance of baptism, is spiritually gifted "with a new nature, adoption, citizenship in Christ's kingdom, and the inheritance of heaven."—*Letter*, p. 124.

NOTE 5.

Mr. Newman writes, "The instrument of our righteousness I would maintain is holy baptism," p. 146. "Baptism is the primary instrument, and creates faith to be what it is."—*Lecture on Justification*, p. 260.

NOTE 6.

"Christians are justified by the communication of an inward and most mysterious gift. From the very time of their baptism they are temples of the Holy Ghost."—*Lecture on Justification*, p. 167.

NOTE 7.

Lest any one should suppose the writer of these pages had misapprehended what "Church principles" intend by the term "Baptismal regeneration," it may be as well for others to judge if there has been any mistake in the meaning of Puseyite expressions, and therefore the following sentence from one of Mr. Newman's Sermons is transcribed:—

"Oh! fearful follower of Christ, how is it that thou hast never

thought of what thou art, and what is in thee? Art not thou Christ's purchased possession; and has he not rescued thee from the devil, and put a new nature into thee; and did not he in baptism cast out the evil spirit, and enter into thee himself, and dwell in thee as if thou hadst been an archangel, or one of the Seraphim who worship before him continually?"

Also some verses from a small volume of poems, by a Mr. Jaber.

ON A CHILD'S BAPTISM AT AMBLESIDE.

Dear Christian child! was it the power
That in those gifted waters came,
Which stirr'd thee in that solemn hour,
And thrill'd through all thy trembling frame?

Oh! was it keen and fierce the smart,
When the old root within thee died,
And the new nature in thine heart
Rose like the swell of ocean's tide?

Yes, in the dawn of thy new birth
There came some spiritual fears,
Faint gleams of after-things—that earth
Might pay the first-fruits of her tears.

Sweet Penitent! all lovely things
Are for their brightness full of fear,
And strange would seem those angel wings
That came and made soft motions near.

And yet the Cross did hush thy cries,
And thou within mine arm didst lie
Quiet, and seal'd for sacrifice
Unto the Holy Trinity.

And such a smile set on thy mouth;
Whilst from that token's four-fold might,
From east and west, from north and south,
Great visions broke upon thy sight.

And such a look came from thine eyes,
 Through lashes fringed with Christian dew ;
 Wonder and hope and fear did rise
 Up from those walls of heavenly blue.

Now thou art consecrate, fair thing !
 A church where sinners have not pray'd,
 A shrine where only angels sing,
 Another stone in Zion laid.

NOTE 8.

Romish and Oxford divines are always writing and talking of "the merits and faith of the Church;" of course the Roman Catholic Church is meant, for none other is so fortunate as to have any *merit*; the constant prayer from age to age, collectively and individually, of all reformed communions, is, "Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners," "*for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*" and all men "are unprofitable servants." It would be conferring a great boon upon the ignorant public if any of the divines of a perfect church would vouchsafe to state at what period of time the "merits of the Church" were laid up in such profusion as to serve all coming generations of sinners with a stock of good works and faith done by others to fall back upon.

Those who have read the History of Europe from the Christian era, either in the chronicles of sacred or profane writers, are at a loss to discover when the storehouse of the Church was filled. In the first ages of Christianity the Apostles had much grief and sorrow of heart for the failings which crept into the Apostolic Churches, and never give the slightest intimation of their bequeathing any works of supererogation for the benefit of posterity. Afterwards, in the *model* Nicene Church, the Fathers used to hold forth long and loud upon the iniquities of the times they lived in, and their auto-biographies do not furnish anything towards the general stock for others. It does not appear the golden age commenced with Popery; for, if all history may be trusted, the Popes and Cardinals were

too busily occupied in interfering in the quarrels of every European nation, to have much time or opportunity for adding to the *spiritual* merits of the Church ; Protestants are therefore quite at a loss for information, and would be glad to see a catalogue, in chronological order, of the saints who did such good service, with the weights and measures of their performances attached, with the *Scriptural* references to prove their value.

“ As for the children of men, they are but vanity ; the children of men are deceitful upon the weights, they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.”—Psalm lxii. 29. (Prayer Book version.)

NOTE 9.

It is out of the question giving references to passages from Dr. Hook ; his publications are unpagged, and vary in size from one penny each to fifty for sixpence ; his works are upon the homœopathic principle, small doses continually repeated, which repel the disease (Popery) by administering to it.

NOTE 10.

“ Whosoever shall affirm that grace is not conferred by these sacraments of the new law, by their own power (*ex opere operato*), let him be accursed.”—*Council of Trent*, Canon 8. “ *On the Sacraments.*”

NOTE 11.

For proving the certainty of the custom of baptizing naked persons, see Ambros., Serm. 20 ; Cyrill. Hiersch. Catech. ; Mystag. ii. 2 ; Chrysostom., Hom. 6 ; Athenas. Ep. ad Orthod. ; Conf. Voss. de Bapt. Disputat. 1. Also, “ A Manual of Christian Antiquities,” Art. Baptism, by the Rev. T. E. Riddle. Also, “ Stuart on the Mode of Baptism.”

NOTE 12.

“ Ultra Protestant,” a term of reproach or nick-name given by a certain party to others, its real signification being similar

to that of "Christian" at Antioch, which meant a person entirely distinct from the self-righteous Pharisees of the Jewish high-church on the one part, and on the other the worshipers of idols.

NOTE 13.

Mr. Palmer has used his private judgment in selecting the *six* councils which he chooses to consider authoritative; Archbishop Laud is contented with *four*; some divines name *eighteen* councils as equally binding, whilst others also say *eighteen*, but choose different ones. There is much disagreement amongst "Catholics" which are the true infallible convocations.

THE END.

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